

A Mahavir Seva Trust Presentation

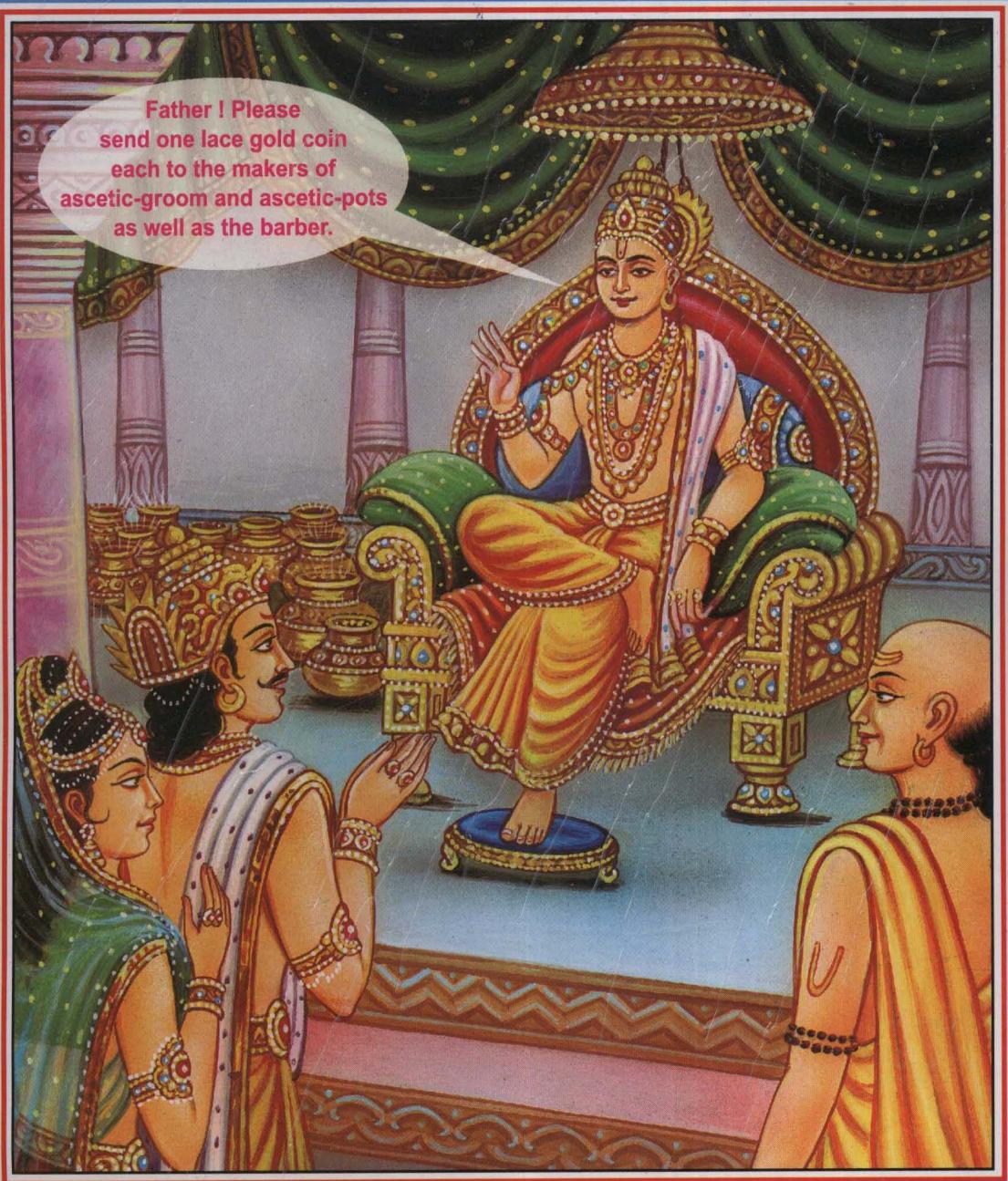


# Atimukta Kumar & Arjun Malakar

(Garland Maker)

Vol 59  
Rs. 25.00

Father ! Please  
send one lace gold coin  
each to the makers of  
ascetic-groom and ascetic-pots  
as well as the barber.



( Two Interesting Tales )

## ATIMUKTA KUMAR AND ARJUNA MALAKAR

Bhagavan Mahavir said 'Soul is Supreme-soul (The God)'. Right effort, with pure feelings, in spiritual practices takes a soul to the level of Supreme Soul. We have presented the stories of two such virtuous souls who attained the state of liberation (*Moksha*) through their own efforts. The first story is – 'Sage Atimukta'. The story of his life is available in *Antakritdashanga Sutra* and *Bhagavati Sutra*.

Ganadhar Gautam, the chief disciple of Bhagavan Mahavir, was once moving about seeking alms in Polaspur city. A boy saw him and brought him home with earnest request. After collecting alms, when Gautam Swami started back the child followed him to Bhagavan Mahavir's religious assembly (*Samavasaran*). Listening to Bhagavan's pious words, he was filled with feelings of detachment and finally got initiated.

After rains ascetic Atimukta one day accompanied the senior ascetics to jungle for nature's call. Looking at flowing water his playful child nature surfaced. Raising a sand wall he blocked the flowing water and put his ascetic pots on the surface to float. Then he uttered with joy, "Float my boat! Float!" The moment senior ascetics saw this activity of Atimukta defying ascetic-discipline, anger was visible on their faces. Atimukta corrected himself and was remorseful of his deed. With earnest repentance he purified himself. When the ascetics returned to Bhagavan they told him about this incident and asked, "After how many rebirths he will get liberated?" Bhagavan said, "This is his last birth before he gets liberated. Though small in body, his soul is great." After vigorous austerities ascetic Atimukta attained liberation.

The second story is about Arjuna Malakar. His story is available in the eighth section of *Antakritdashanga Sutra*. How a simple garland-maker (*malakar*) turned to be a cruel murderer and then how his life suddenly changed when he was about to hit Shravak Sudarshan merchant. He came to Bhagavan Mahavir's *Samavasaran* and after listening to the Sermon got initiated. From Arjuna Malakar he became ascetic Arjuna and took to the path of ascetic-discipline. As people knew him only as a ferocious murderer, they hit him angrily with sticks and stones when they saw him unarmed and dressed in white. Ascetic Arjuna endured all this with equanimity and forgiveness. Within a short period of six months he cut the Karmic bonds and got liberated. It is a unique and astonishing story.

These tales published as a comic-book will leave permanent imprints of forgiveness, compassion, austerity, generosity and righteousness on your mind.

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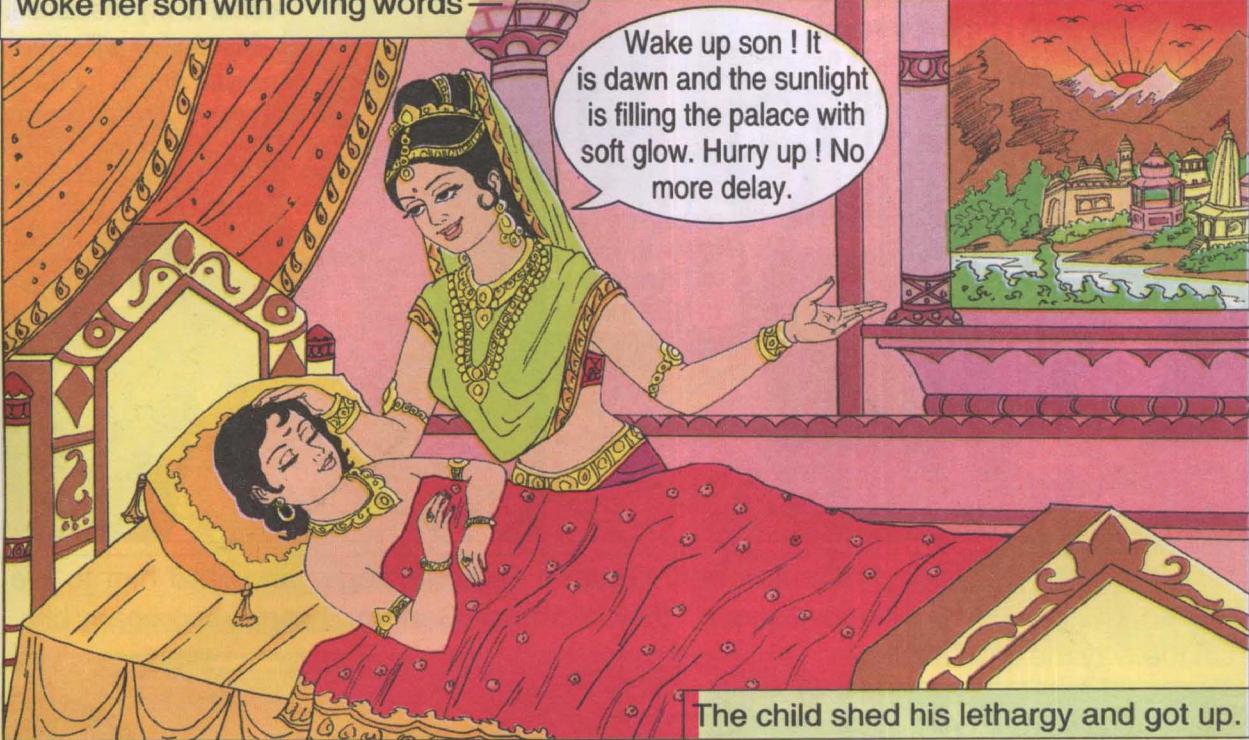
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## Atimukta Kumar

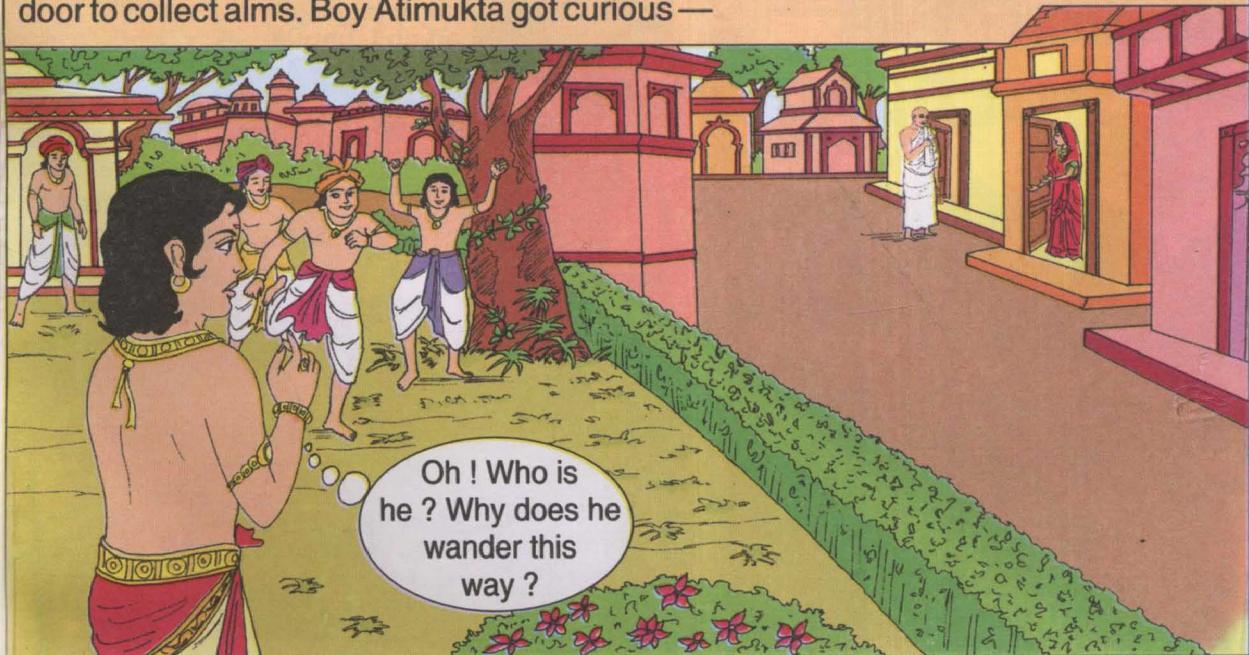
woke her son with loving words —

King Vijaya and queen Shridevi of Polaspur had a handsome and charming son prince Atimukta. One day mother Shridevi



The child shed his lethargy and got up.

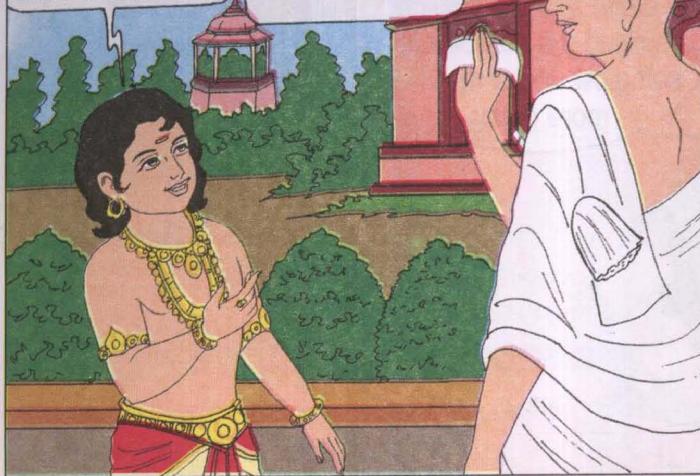
After taking his bath etc. the prince went to play with his friends in a nearby garden. While playing he saw Gautam Swami on the highway going from door to door to collect alms. Boy Atimukta got curious —



The boy rushed to the sage and asked—

Revered one !  
Who are you and  
why do you walk  
around thus ?

Son ! I am a  
Shraman<sup>#</sup> and  
I move around  
to collect alms.



Hearing this the boy said—

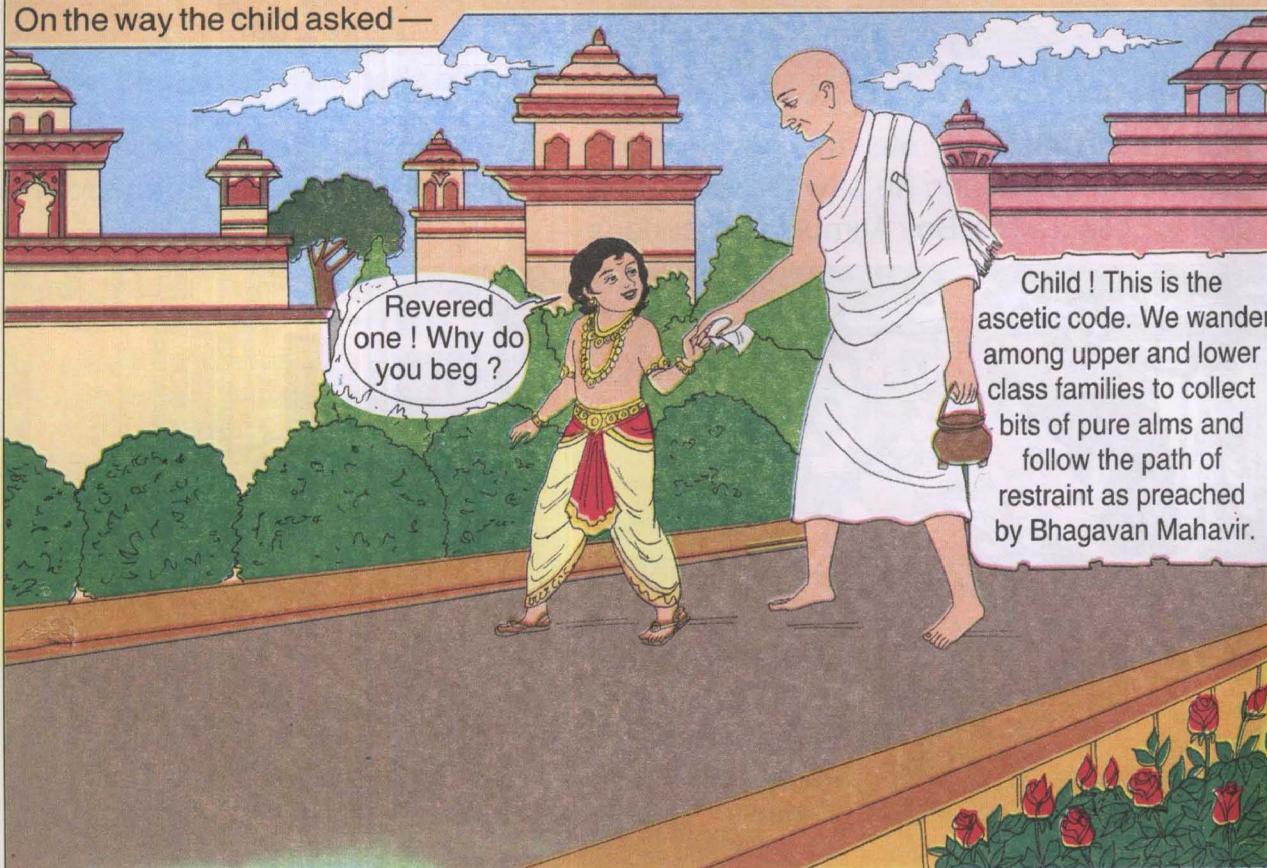
Oh ! That's  
the matter. Please  
come to my residence.  
My mother will offer  
you ample food.



With these words prince Atimukta held Gautam Swami's finger and lead him to the palace. The innocent love and request of the child made Gautam Swami accompany him. On the way the child asked—

Revered  
one ! Why do  
you beg ?

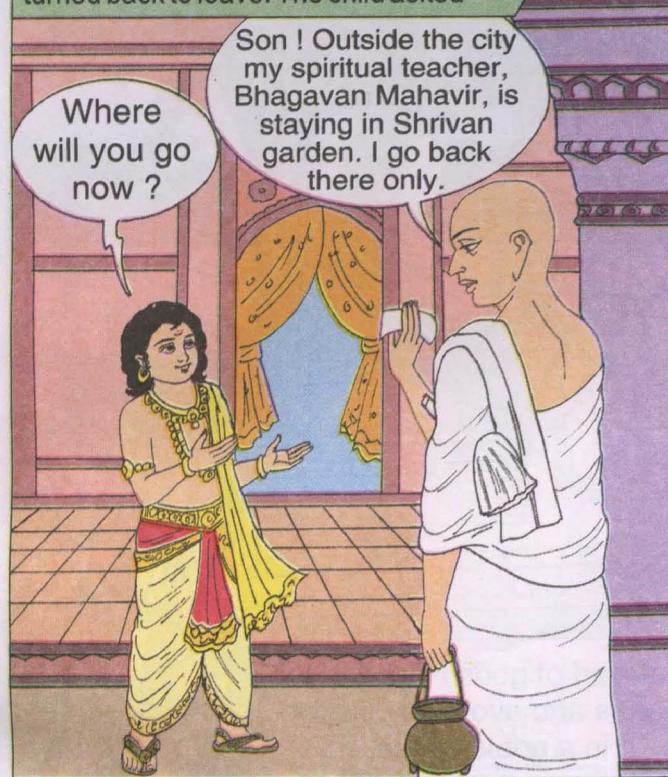
Child ! This is the  
ascetic code. We wander  
among upper and lower  
class families to collect  
bits of pure alms and  
follow the path of  
restraint as preached  
by Bhagavan Mahavir.



Thus while talking they came near the palace. Mother Shridevi was overwhelmed with joy when she saw Atimukta leading Gautam Swami holding his finger. She rushed to the gate and paid homage to the sage —

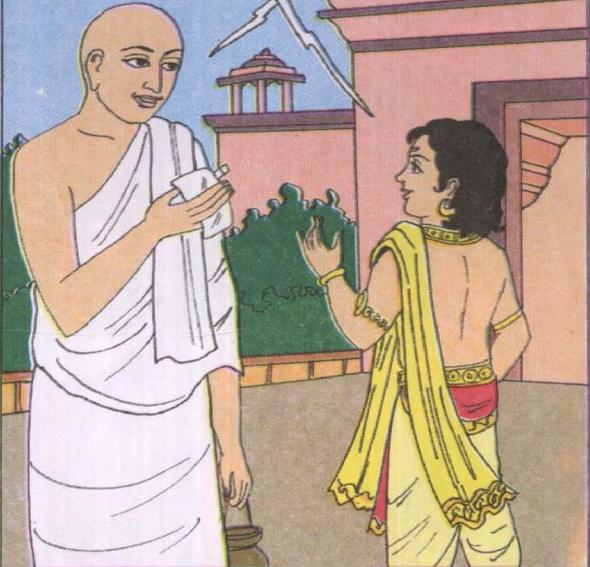


Gautam Swami accepted food as per his code and turned back to leave. The child asked —



So, he is your spiritual teacher. May I also accompany you to meet him ?

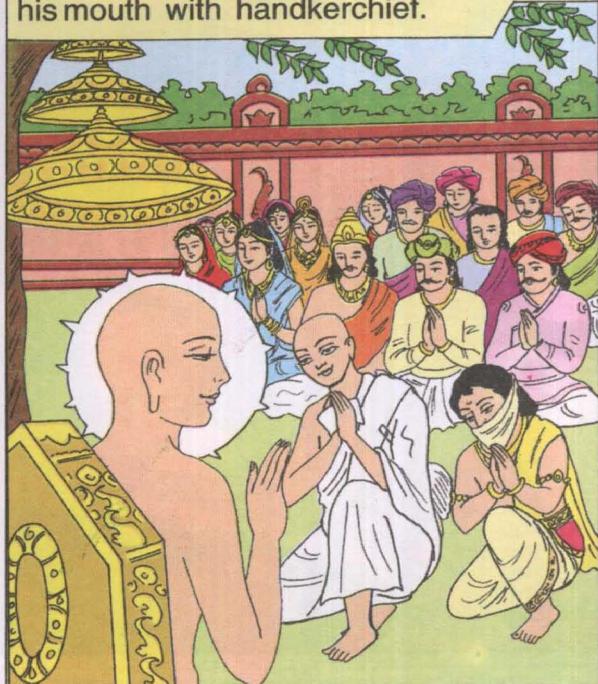
Sure ! You will be happy to behold him.



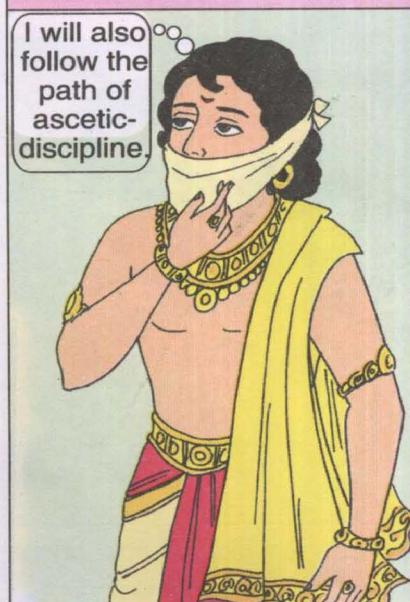
After this nod from Gautam Swami prince Atimukta also went along to behold Bhagavan.

## Atimukta Kumar

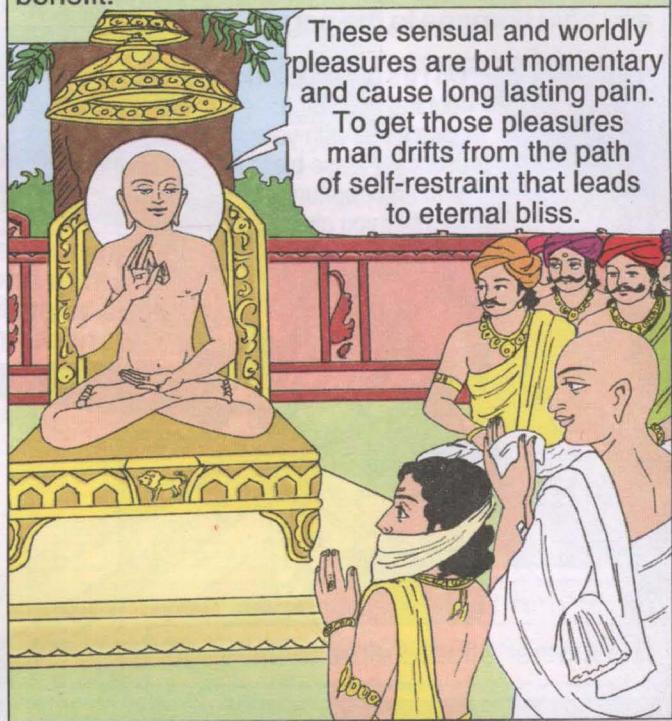
On reaching the garden, Gautam Swami paid homage to Bhagavan by bowing and going around him thrice. Prince Atimukta also bowed with devotion after covering his mouth with handkerchief.



Prince Atimukta was deeply impressed by the sermon. Imprints of piety from the past birth evoked desire for spiritual bliss in his mind.

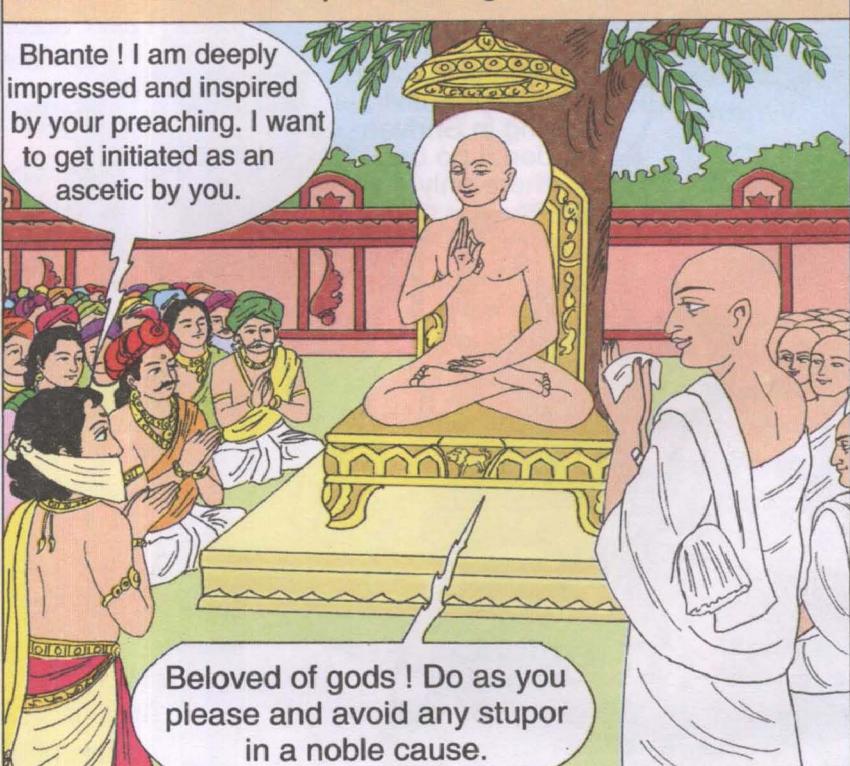


Bhagavan Mahavir gave his sermon in the large assembly and narrated pious tales for Atimukta's benefit.



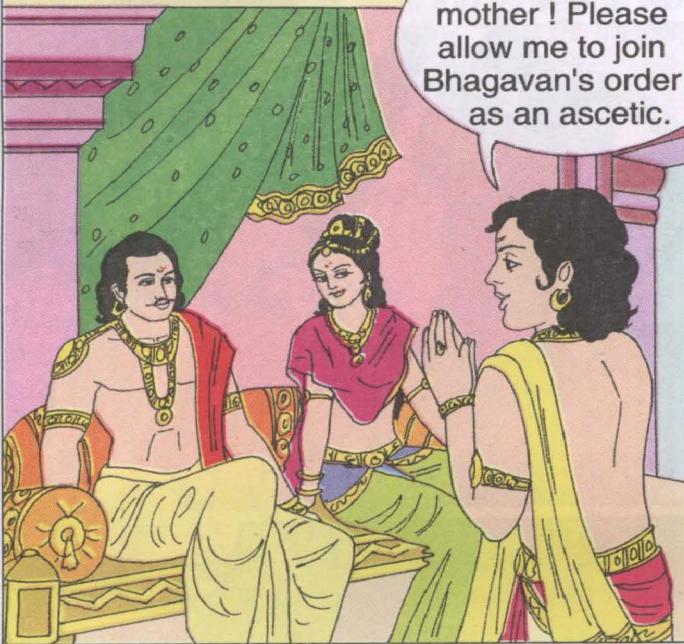
With this resolve he requested Bhagavan with folded hands—

Bhante ! I am deeply impressed and inspired by your preaching. I want to get initiated as an ascetic by you.



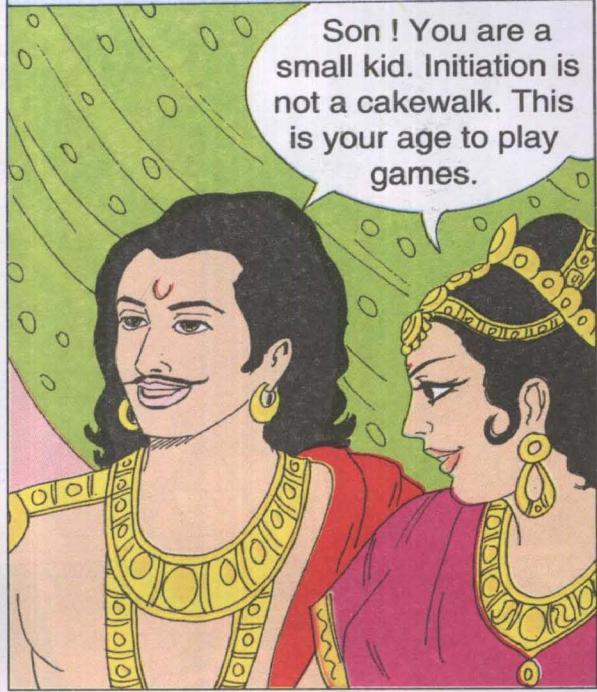
Getting Bhagavan's permission prince Atimukta returned to the palace and conveyed his desire for initiation to his parents—

Father and mother ! Please allow me to join Bhagavan's order as an ascetic.

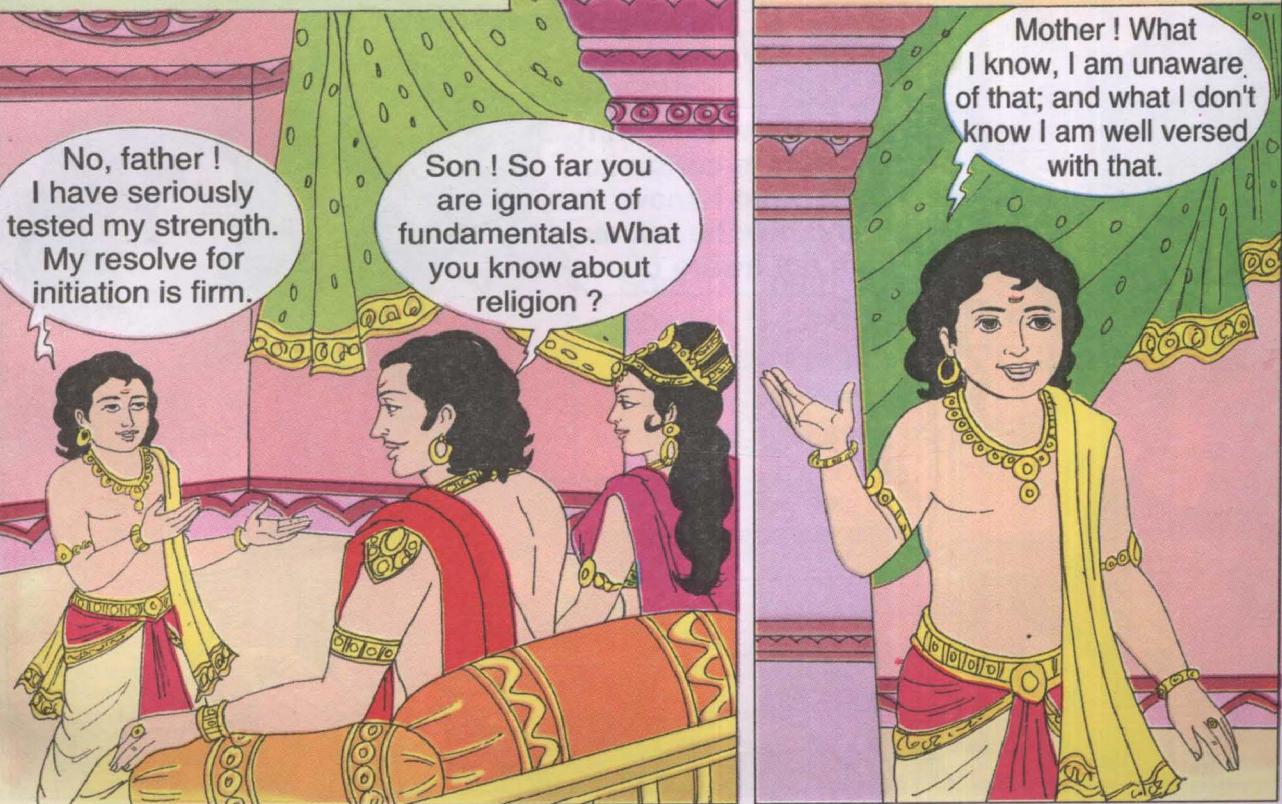
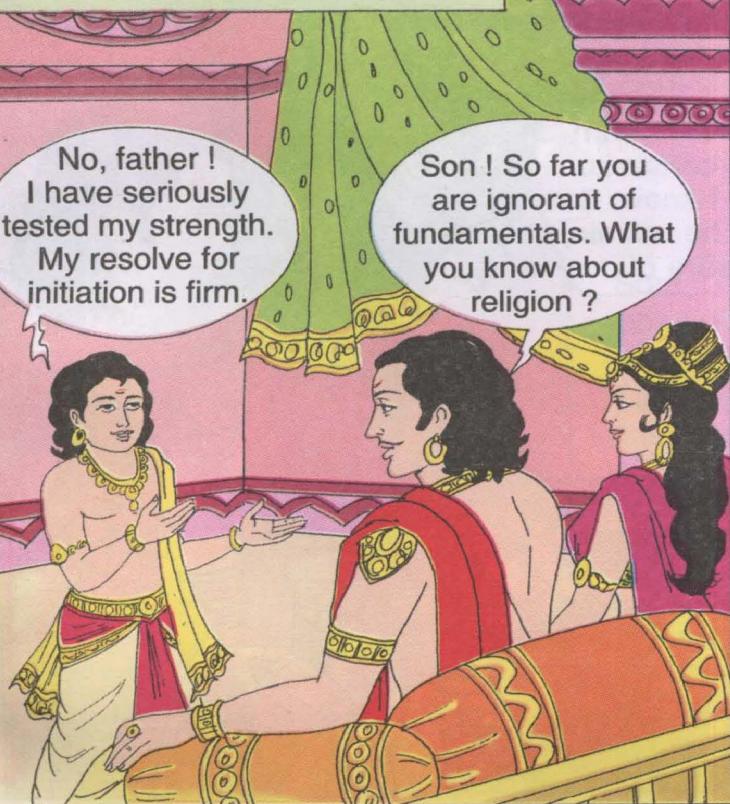


Hearing about their son's lofty goal the parents laughed and said—

Son ! You are a small kid. Initiation is not a cakewalk. This is your age to play games.



To these words Atimukta replied —



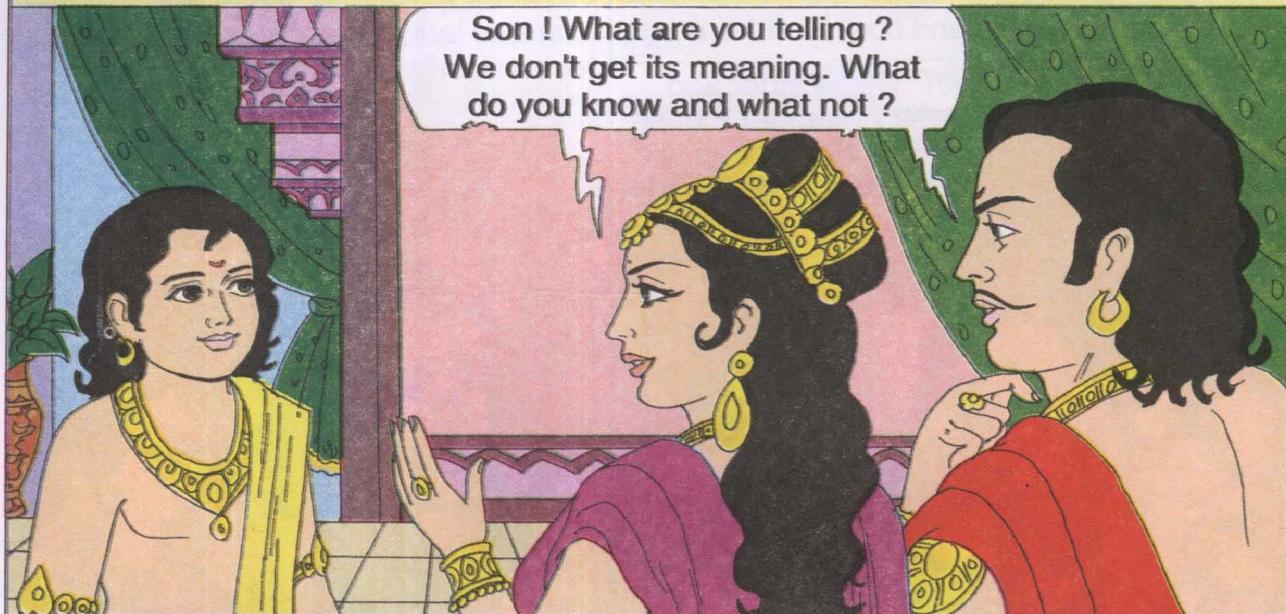
Atimukta replied—

Mother ! What I know, I am unaware of that; and what I don't know I am well versed with that.



On hearing such puzzling statement, the parents stared at Atimukta with surprise.

Son ! What are you telling ?  
We don't get its meaning. What  
do you know and what not ?

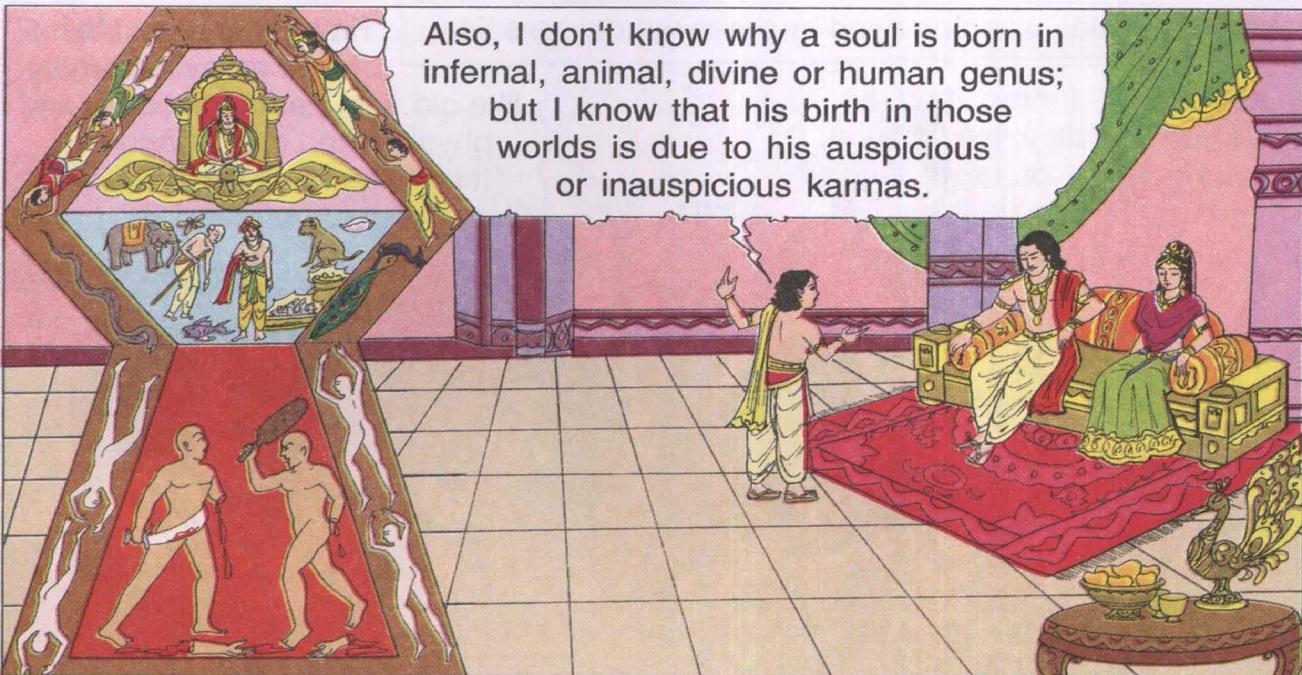


Then Atimukta explained—

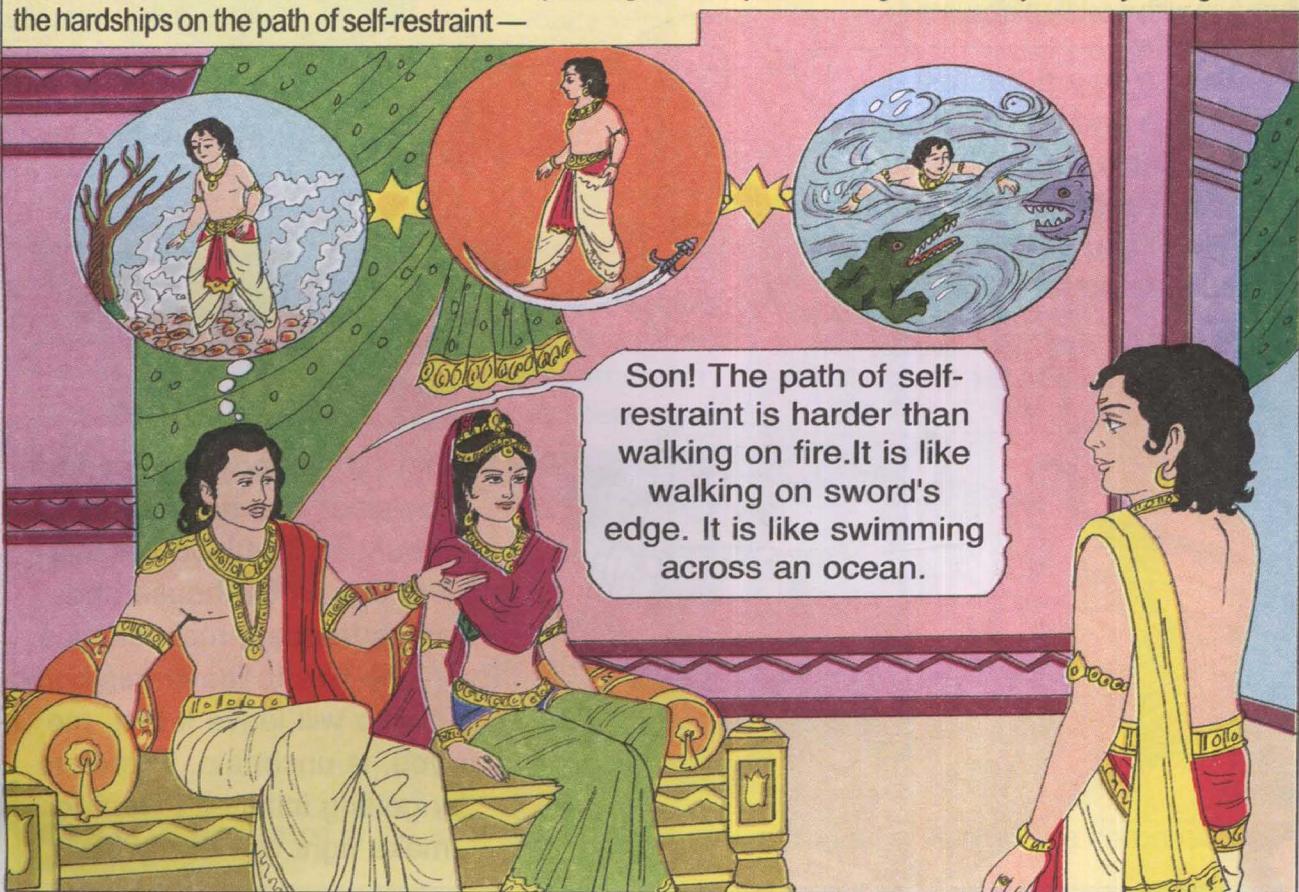
Father ! One who is born  
in this world is certain to  
die. This is what I know. But  
when and how he will die,  
I am not aware of.



Also, I don't know why a soul is born in infernal, animal, divine or human genus; but I know that his birth in those worlds is due to his auspicious or inauspicious karmas.



Listening to such deep and mysterious speech by Atimukta the parents realized that his determination was firm. His wish to renounce the world was very strong. Still they tried to frighten him by cleverly telling about the hardships on the path of self-restraint —



Prince Atimukta was unmoved by these words, he said —

Father ! Human life is

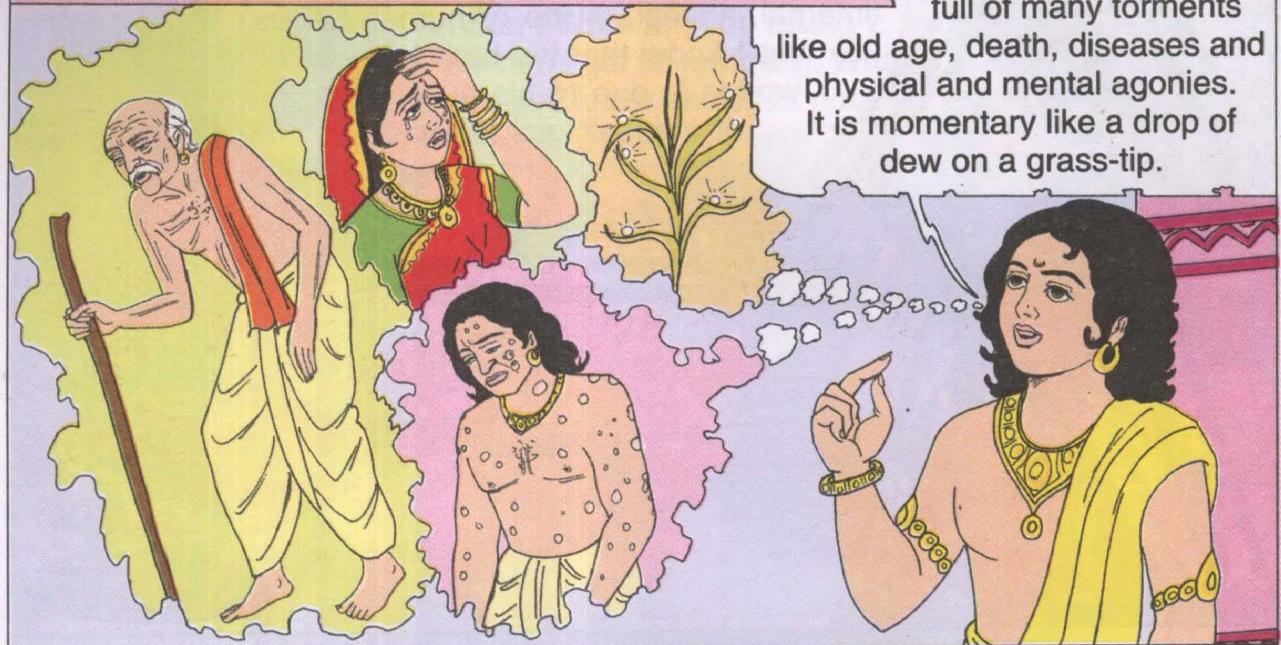
full of many torments

like old age, death, diseases and

physical and mental agonies.

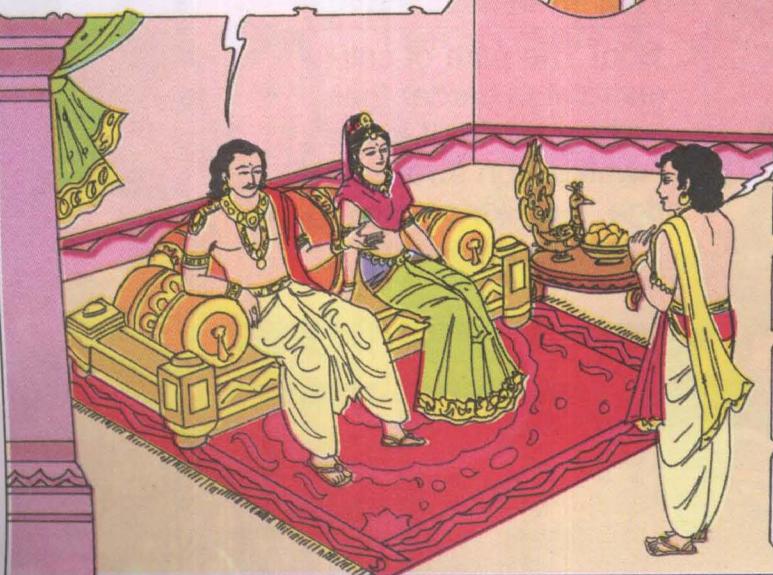
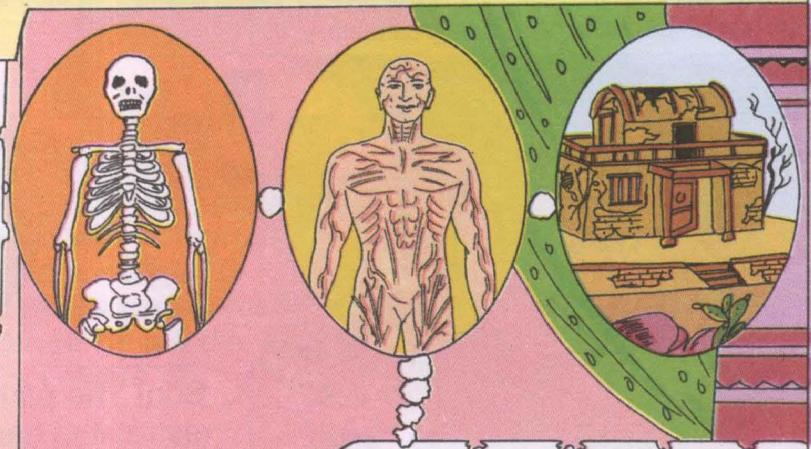
It is momentary like a drop of

dew on a grass-tip.



When Atimukta was undisturbed even after hearing about difficulties of ascetic life, the parents tried to lure him with worldly pleasures —

Son ! You are healthy, handsome and born in a royal family. Enjoy your good-luck, youth and beauty. After we die and when you get old enough you may go for initiation.



Mother ! This body is supported by wood-like bones and surrounded by blood vessels.

It is like an old house and requires frequent maintenance. Everyone has to leave this body but who will leave it first, me or you, is uncertain. Therefore by getting initiated I want to make right use of my life.

Realizing that Atimukta could not be influenced through fear or allurement, the parents unwillingly said—

All right, son ! We permit you to get initiated but we want you to enjoy regal grandeur for a day. We want to crown you just for a day.

Atimukta honoured his parents' wish with silence.

Next day preparations for Atimukta's coronation started. Whole Polaspur was decorated. Drums and flutes were played all around. It became the talk of the town—

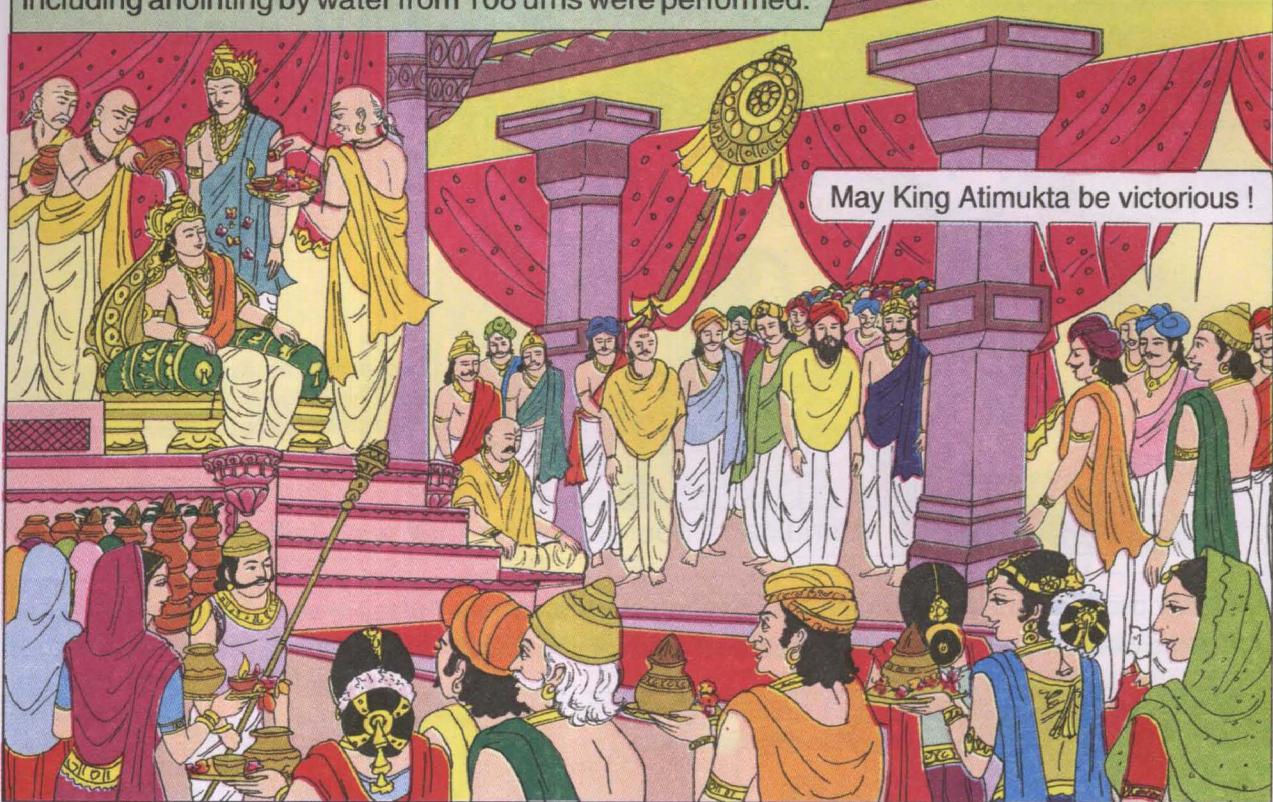
Yes, brother ! At this tender age such detachment is unseen.

The path of self-restraint is very tedious. How this delicate prince will tread this difficult path.

Our prince is being crowned just for a day. Later on he will get initiated.

Variety of views floated in the air and eagerness of the people to witness the coronation of their prince increased.

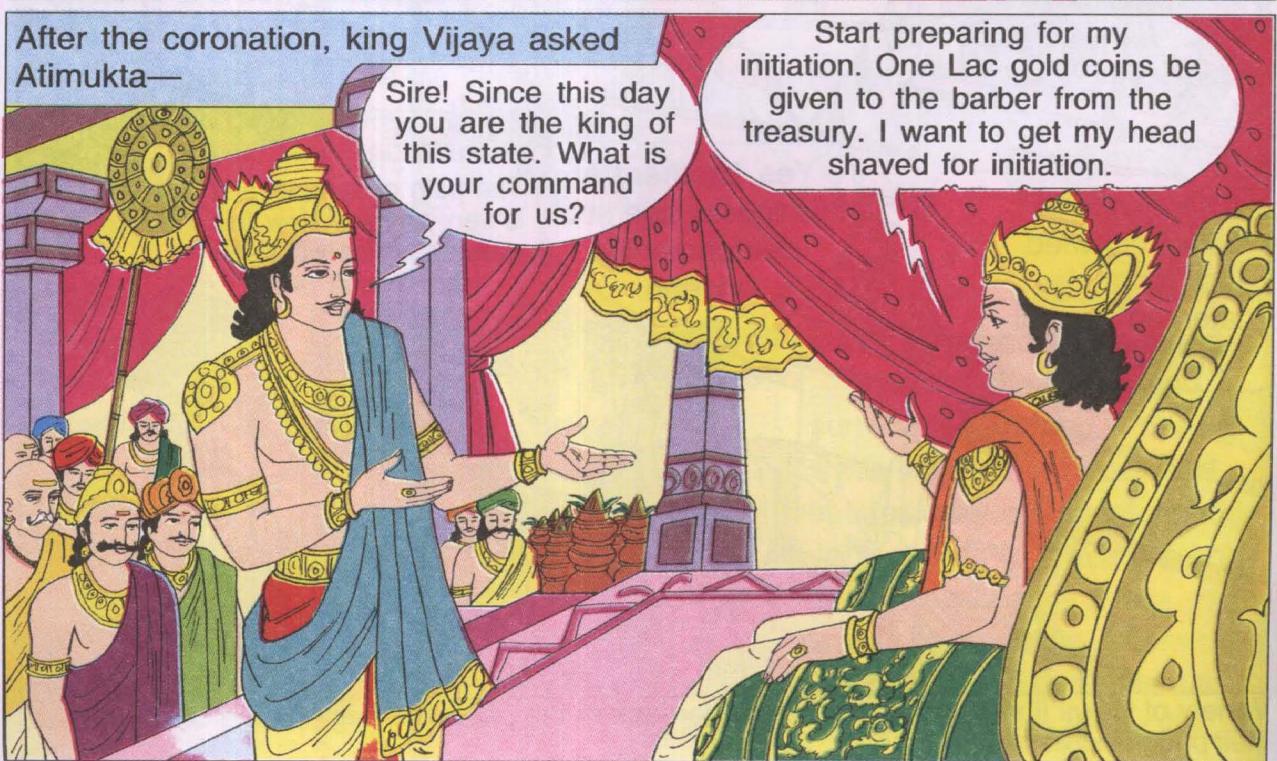
Soon arrived the coronation day. Splendour of the court was worth seeing. Prince Atimukta was adorned with precious royal attire. He was seated on the throne and coronation rituals including anointing by water from 108 urns were performed.



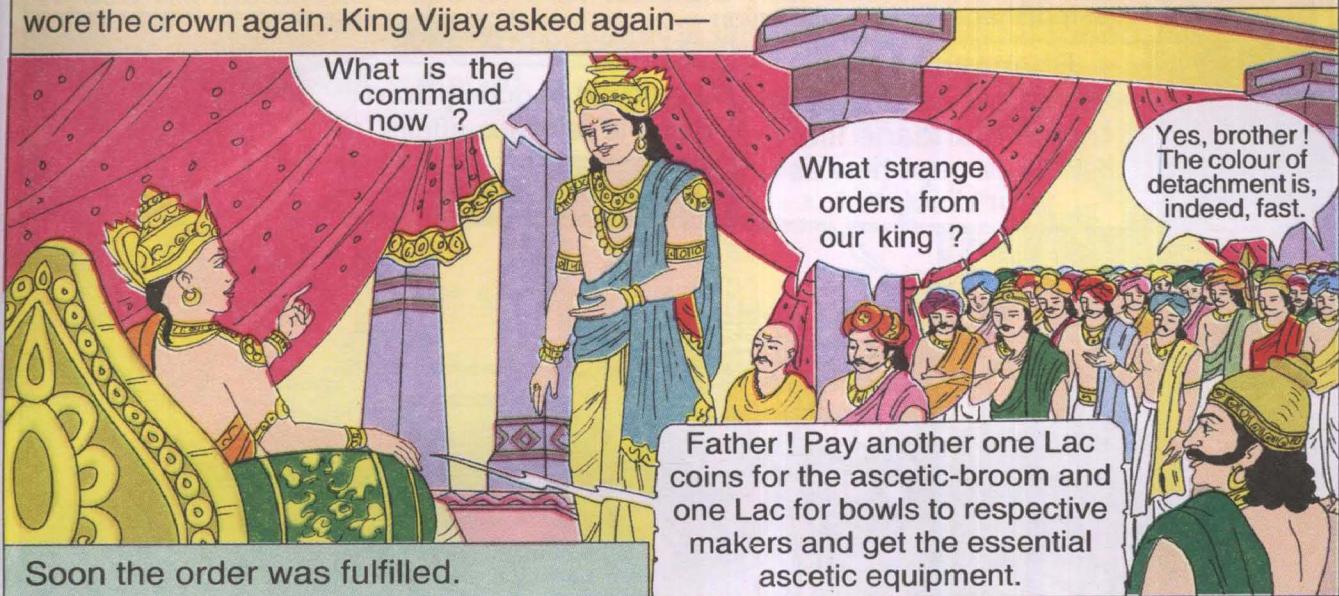
After the coronation, king Vijaya asked Atimukta—

Sire! Since this day you are the king of this state. What is your command for us?

Start preparing for my initiation. One Lac gold coins be given to the barber from the treasury. I want to get my head shaved for initiation.



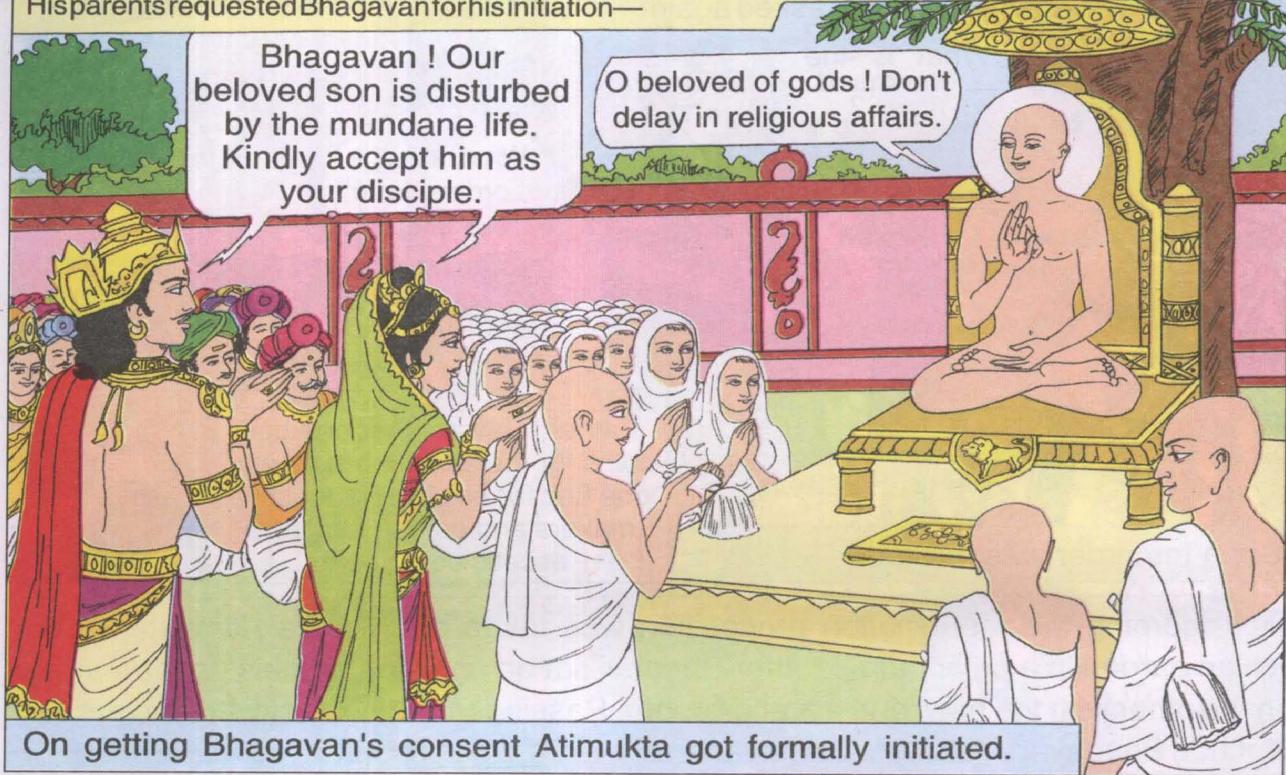
King's order was fulfilled. After getting shaved and left with just a small ponytail, Atimukta wore the crown again. King Vijay asked again—



Next morning the renunciation procession was taken out. Prince Atimukta left for Srivan garden in a palanquin. Mother Shridevi sat on one side and his governess sat on the other with the bowl and ascetic-broom. Passing through the city the procession reached Bhagavan Mahavir's Samavasaran.

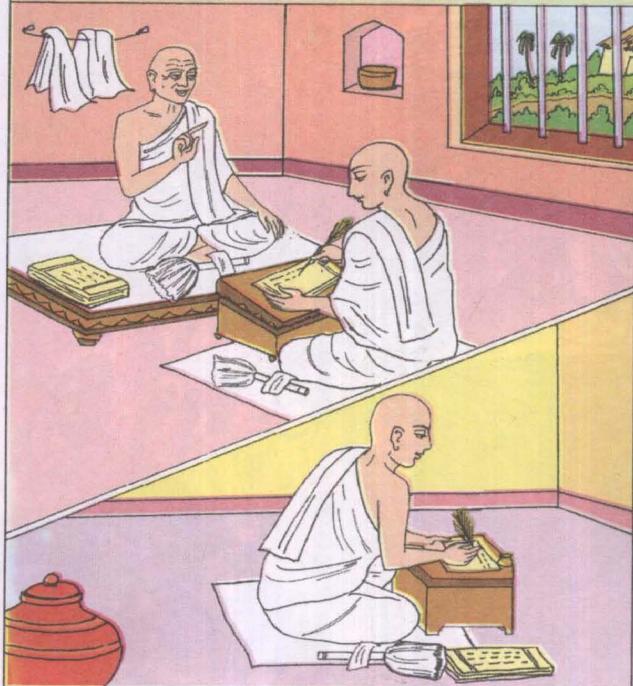


On reaching Shrivangarden Atimukta changed his dress. In the ascetic attire he came before Bhagavan. His parents requested Bhagavan for his initiation—

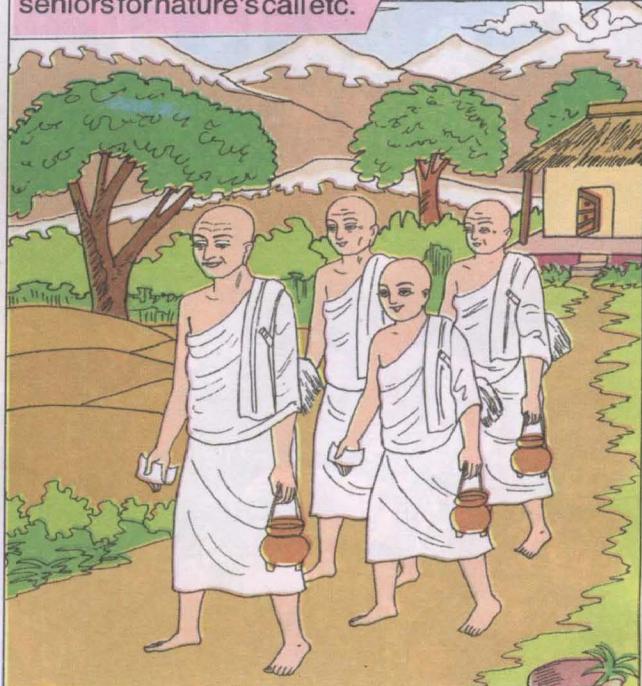


On getting Bhagavan's consent Atimukta got formally initiated.

After the initiation ritual saint Atimukta got deeply involved in the study of eleven Angas including Samayik.



Then started the monsoon season\*. One day it had rained heavily. Saint Atimukta set out with seniors for nature's call etc.



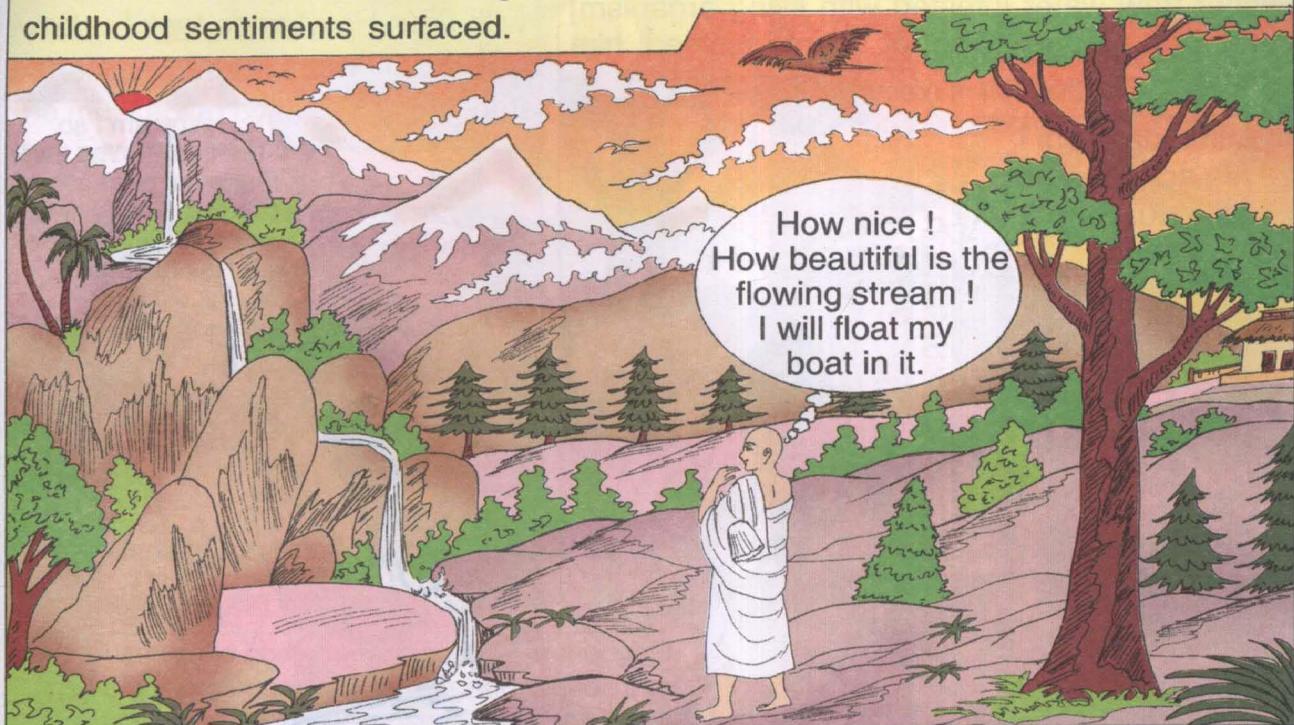
# The corpus of Jain scriptures attributed to Bhagavan Mahavir.

\* Chaturmas

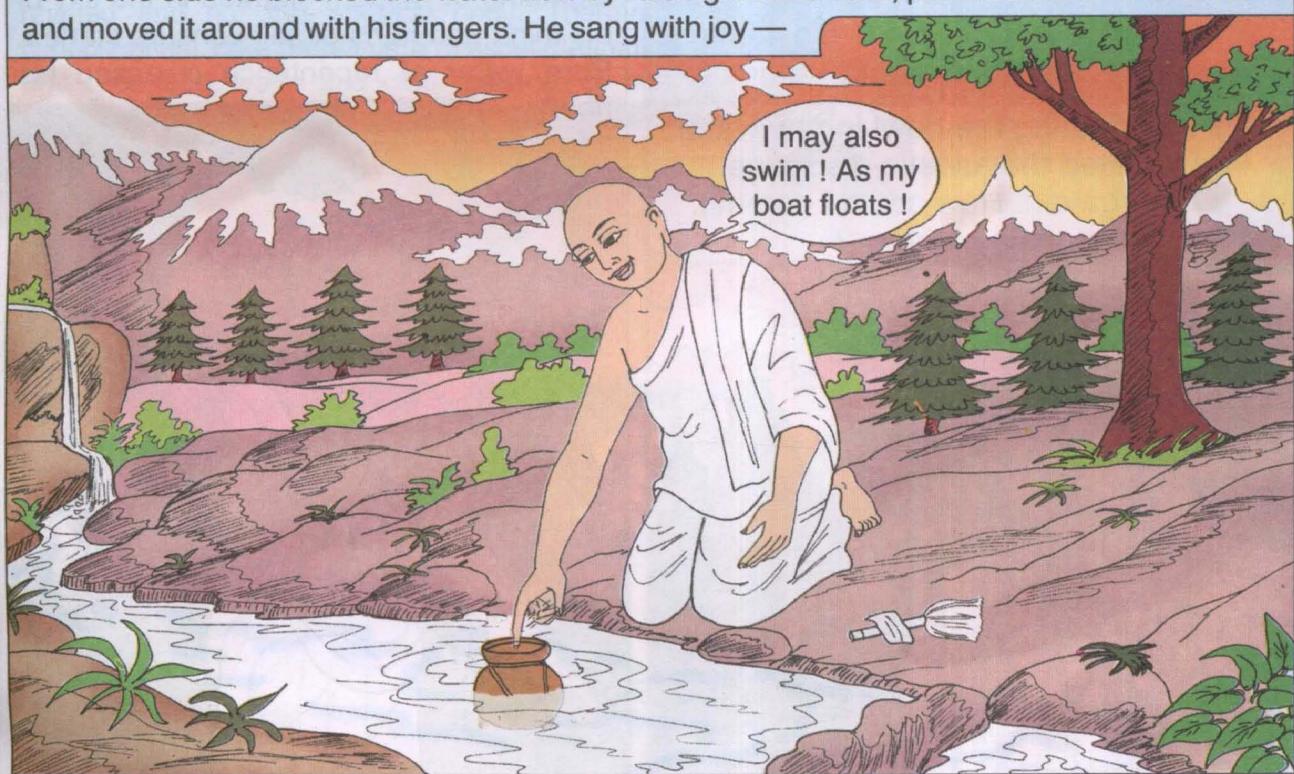
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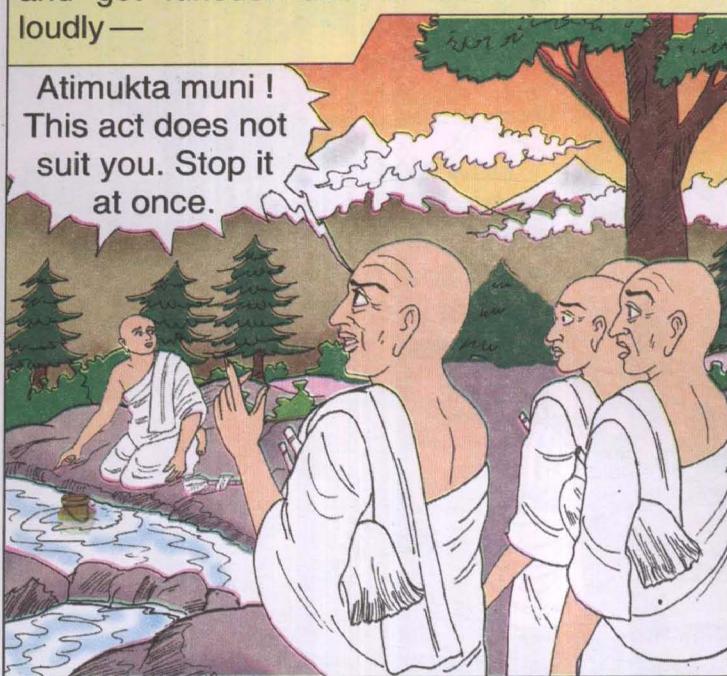
Near a hill the saints dispersed for nature's call. Saint Atimukta returned before others. He saw rain water flowing downhill in streams with musical sound. His playful childhood sentiments surfaced.



From one side he blocked the water flow by raising a sand dam, put his bowl on the surface and moved it around with his fingers. He sang with joy —

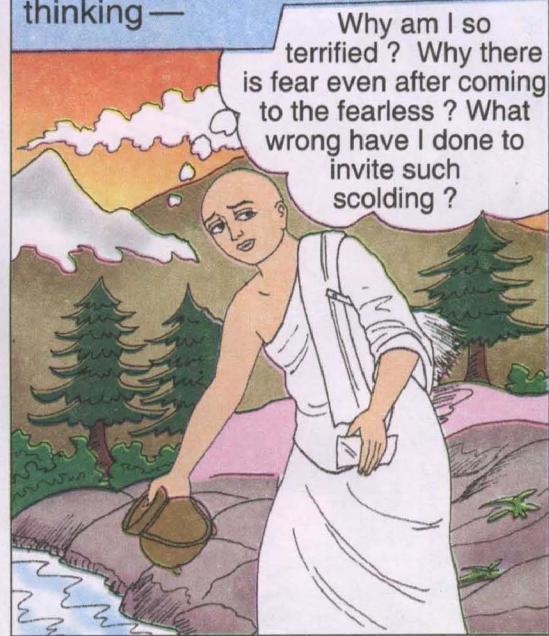


While he was playing, the seniors returned. They saw ascetic Atimukta playing in Sachit water [raw water infested with living organism] and got furious. One of them scolded him loudly—



Atimukta muni !  
This act does not  
suit you. Stop it  
at once.

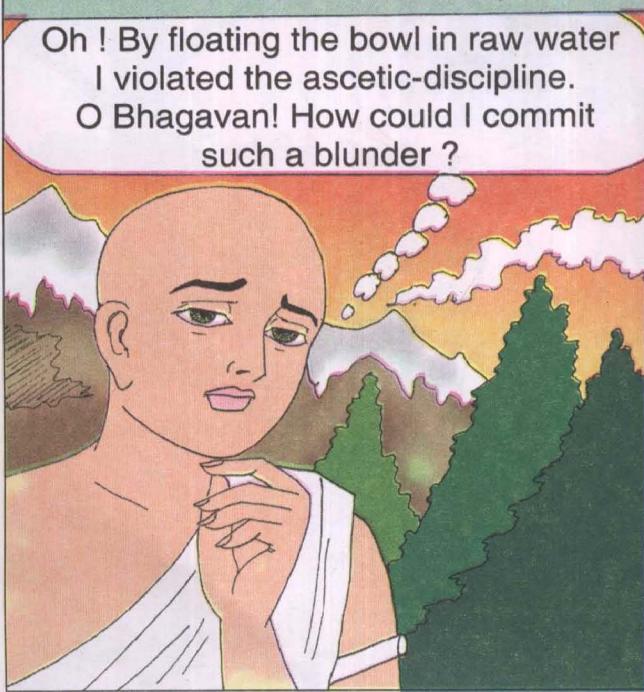
The first scolding of his life and Atimukta muni trembled with fear. He at once took his bowl out from water and started thinking—



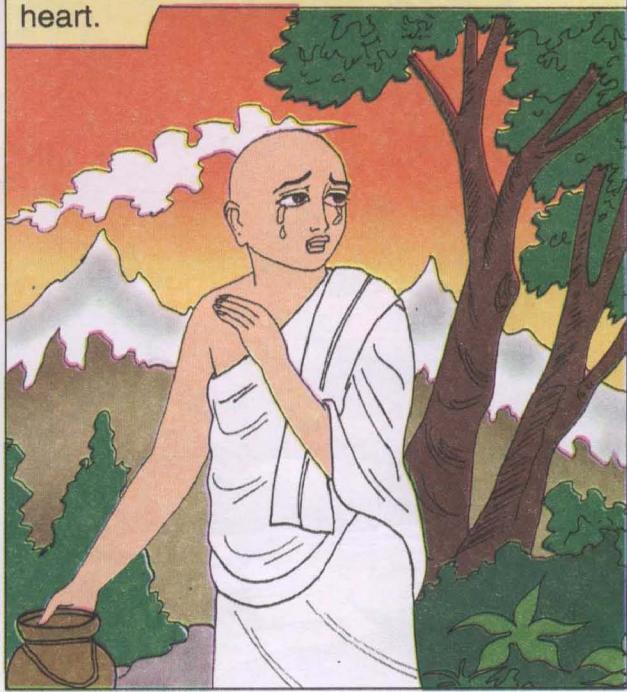
Why am I so  
terrified ? Why there  
is fear even after coming  
to the fearless ? What  
wrong have I done to  
invite such  
scolding ?

He tried to search within for the cause of the anger of the seniors. He soon became aware of his restrictions and repented—

Oh ! By floating the bowl in raw water  
I violated the ascetic-discipline.  
O Bhagavan! How could I commit  
such a blunder ?



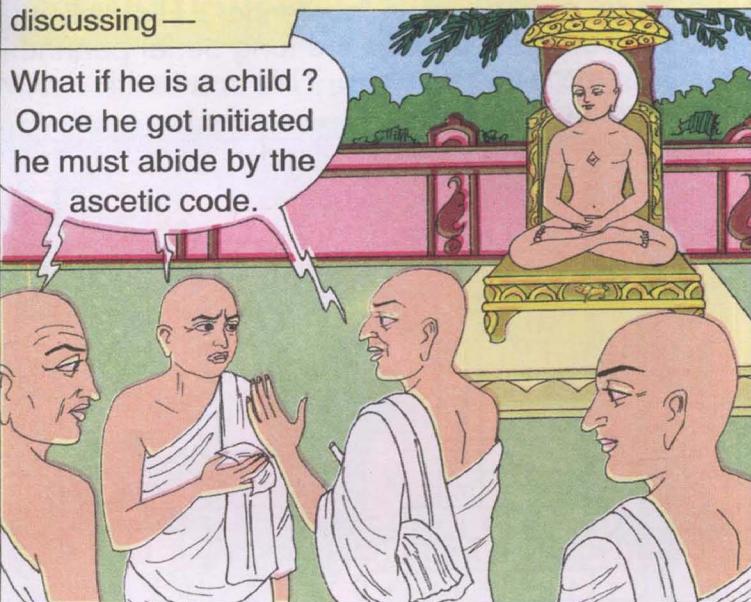
Lightning of wisdom sparked in the sky of his mind and rains of self-censure started. Pure water of repentance cleansed his heart.



## Atimukta Kumar

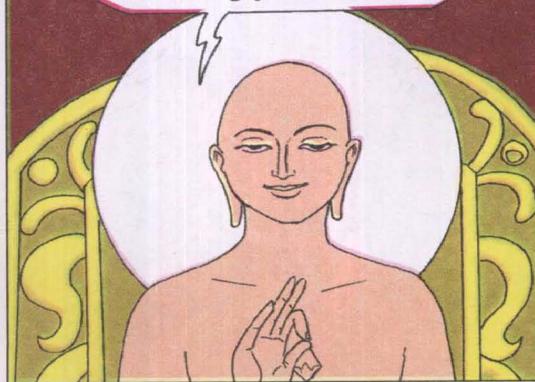
When the saints returned to Bhagavan, they started discussing —

What if he is a child ?  
Once he got initiated  
he must abide by the  
ascetic code.



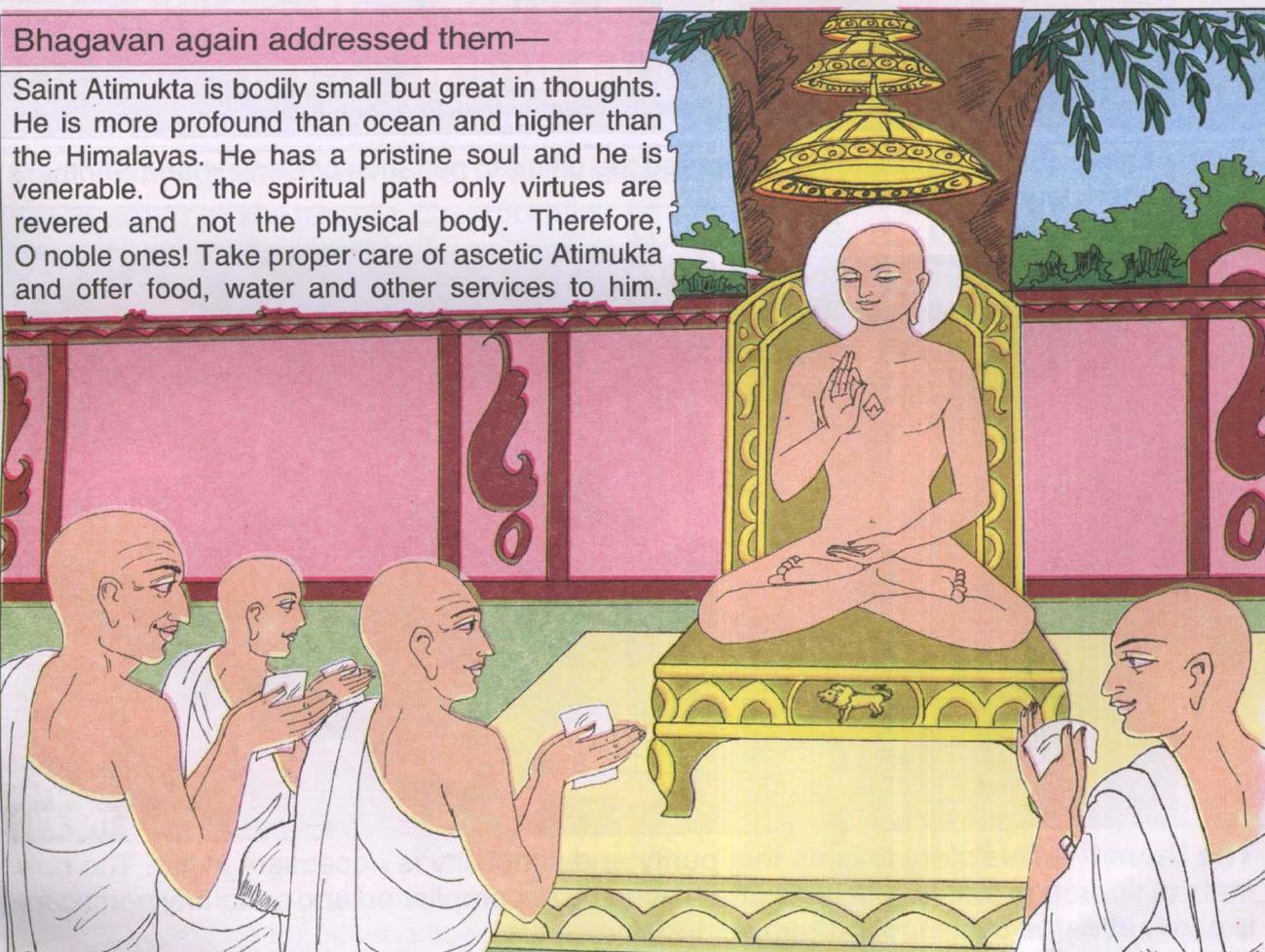
Bhagavan was aware of the thoughts of the senior ascetics. He said —

O noble ones ! Child saint Atimukta is innocent by nature. He will get liberated in this birth only. Don't criticize or belittle him. Don't be angry with him.



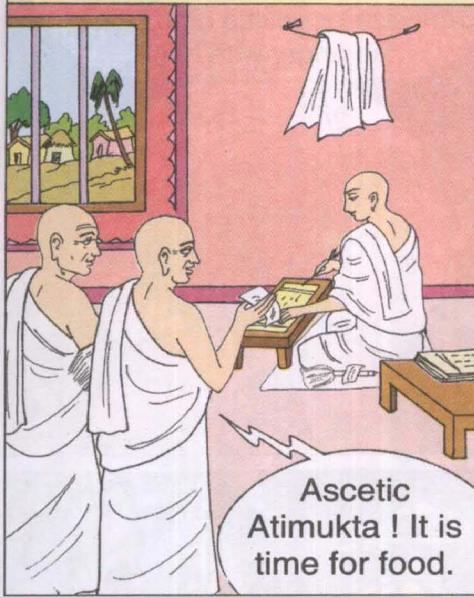
Bhagavan again addressed them —

Saint Atimukta is bodily small but great in thoughts. He is more profound than ocean and higher than the Himalayas. He has a pristine soul and he is venerable. On the spiritual path only virtues are revered and not the physical body. Therefore, O noble ones! Take proper care of ascetic Atimukta and offer food, water and other services to him.

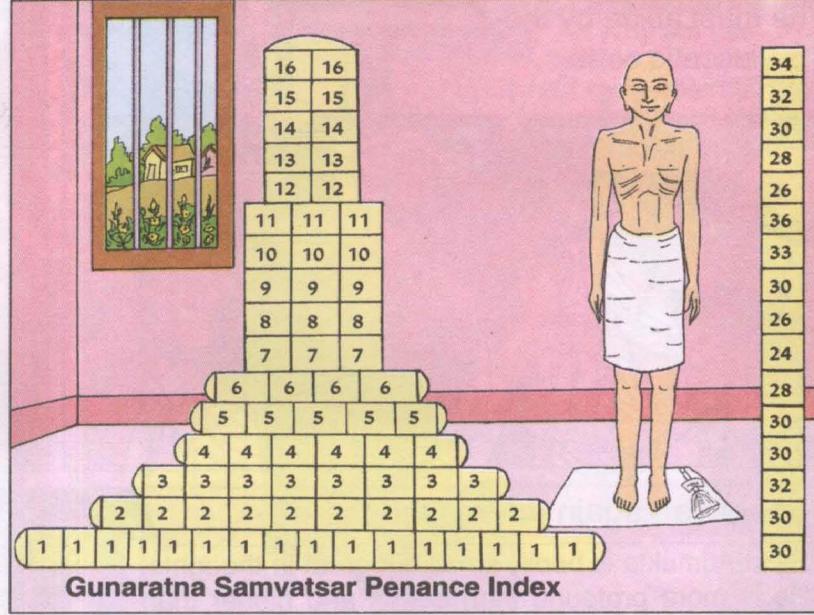


## Atimukta Kumar

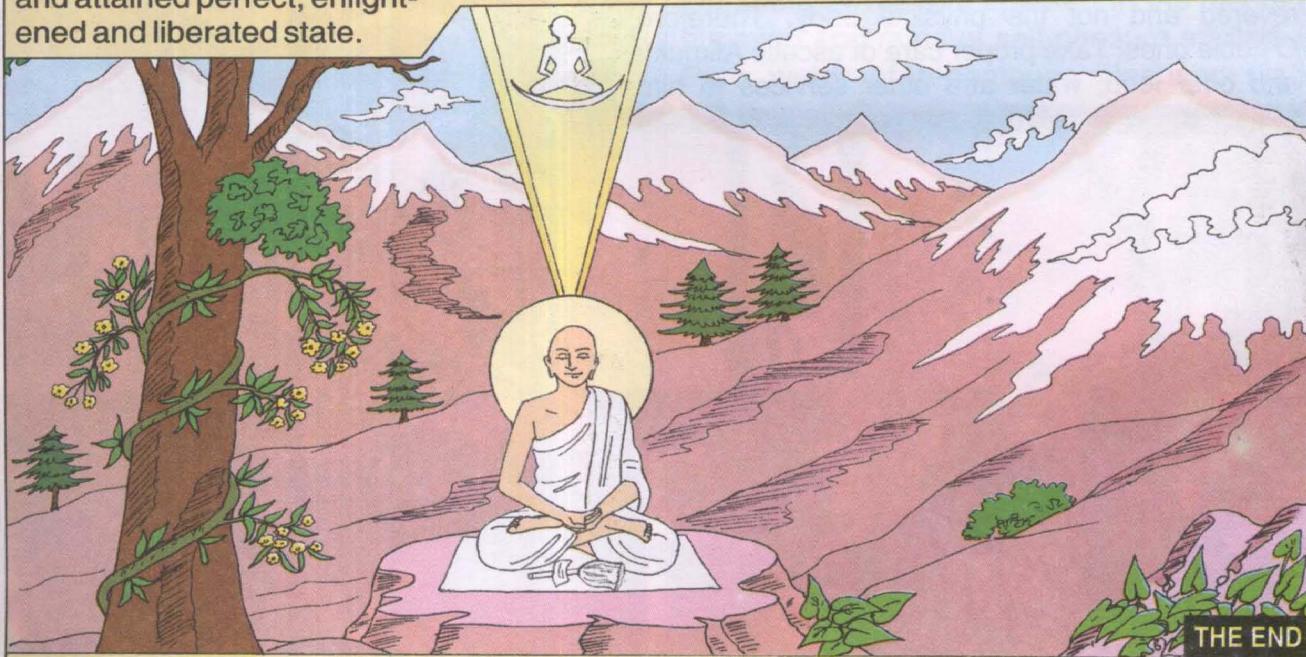
These noble words of Bhagavan Mahavir removed all doubts in the minds of the senior ascetics. They started serving ascetic Atimukta with respect and devotion.



Saint Atimukta spent many years strictly observing the ascetic code and rigorous austerities. His delicate body withered. He observed the long serial penance called Gunaratna Samvatsar. This made his body extremely weak.



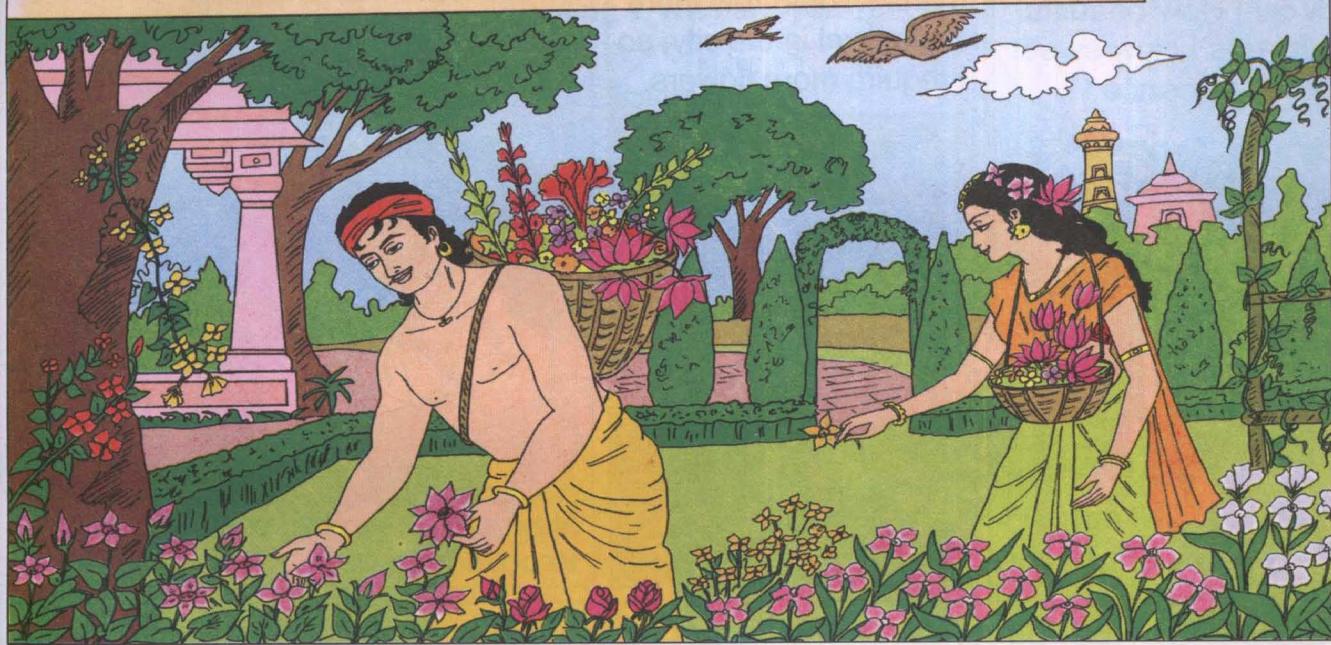
In the end he went to Vipul Giri hill, observed the ultimate penance of Sanlekhana Santhara and attained perfect, enlightened and liberated state.



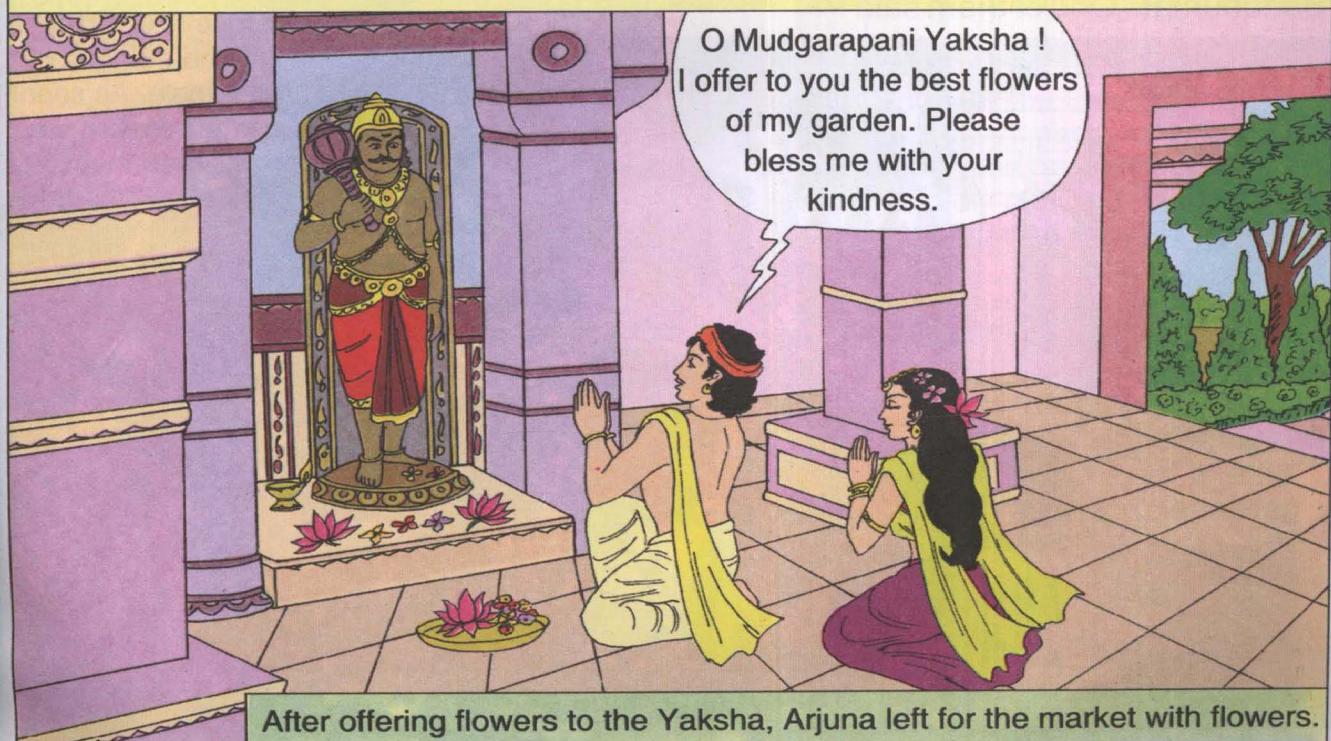
**The theme**— This story tells us that purity and simplicity is necessary in life. The rare state of liberation that is difficult to attain even by accomplished and scholarly practitioners is easily attained by unspoiled, simple and pure souls.

# ARJUNA MALAKAR

Arjuna malakar (garland maker) lived in Rajagriha. Near the town he had a beautiful garden full of variety of colourful and fragrant flowers. Selling flowers was his livelihood.



Each morning, as a rule, he first of all plucked flowers and offered to a Yaksha<sup>#</sup> image in a nearby Yaksha temple. One morning—

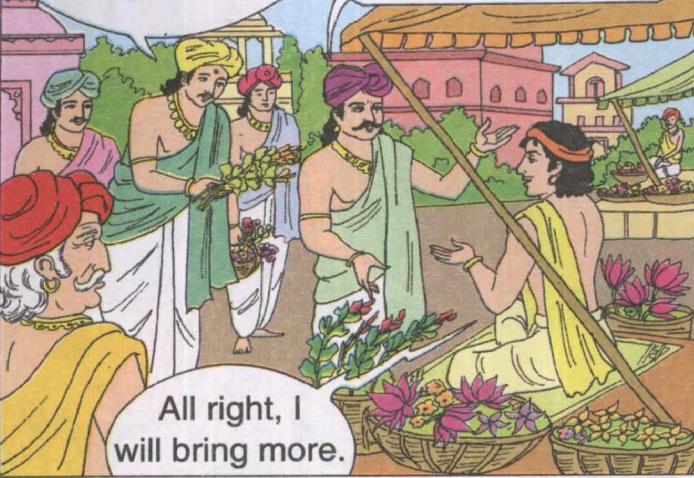


After offering flowers to the Yaksha, Arjuna left for the market with flowers.

He sat at his fixed place along the highway to sell flowers. His flowers were famous throughout the city and everyone praised them—

Vow ! How beautiful flowers ! How sweet fragrance !

Arjuna ! Tomorrow there is a festival in the city, so I require more flowers.



In the evening Arjuna returned home and told his wife Bandhumati—

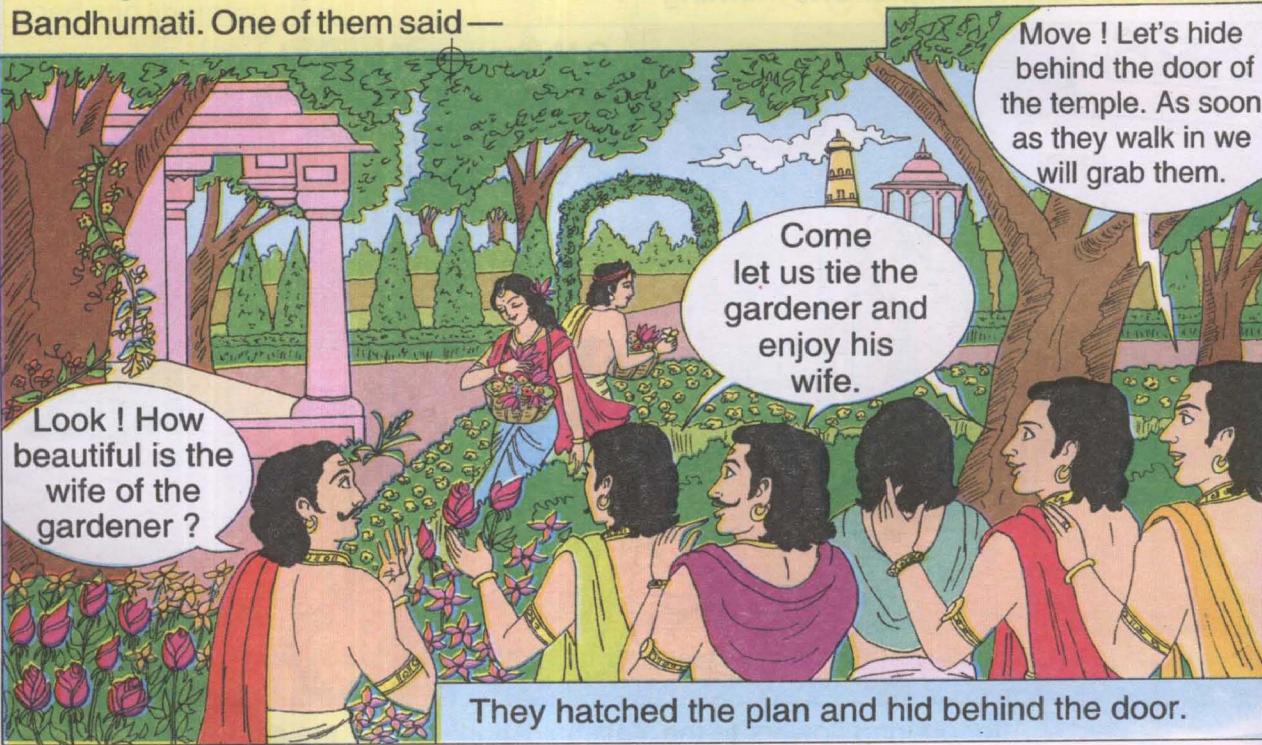
Listen, tomorrow there will be more demand of flowers, so we will go to the garden before dawn to pluck flowers.

All right, beloved !



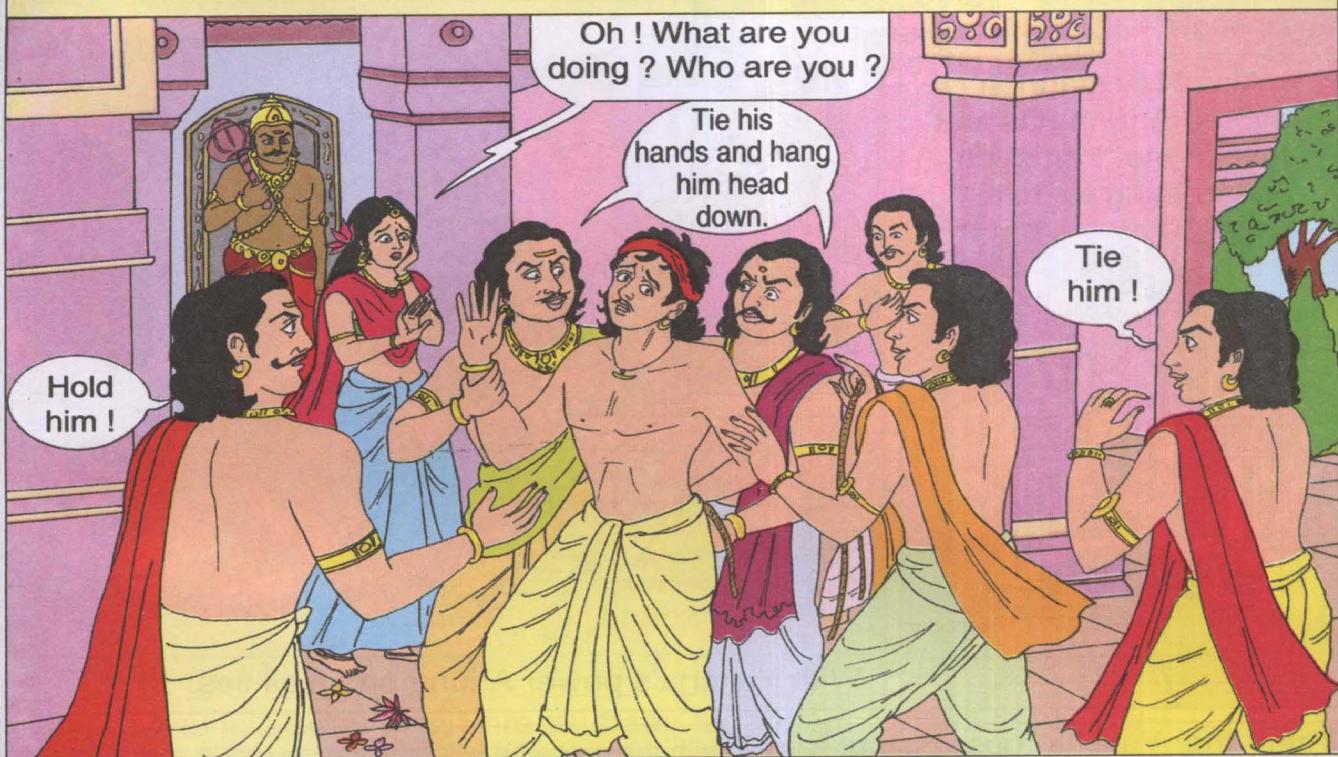
Next day they got up early and left to collect flowers.

In the town lived a group of six friends, popularly called Gaushtak Mandali. The king had granted them amnesty and the group became rowdy and wild. By chance next morning when the group was enjoying in the garden the members saw Arjuna and Bandhumati. One of them said—

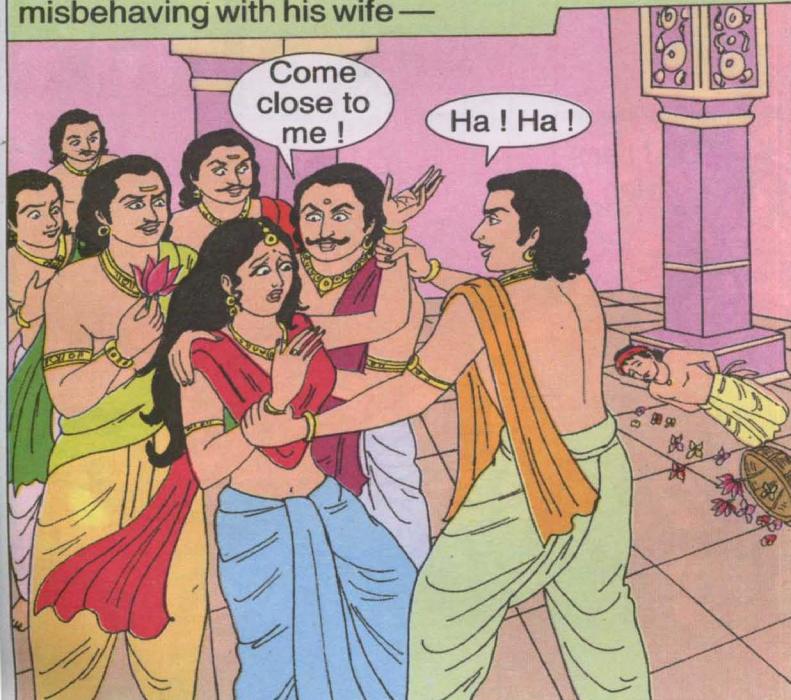


## Arjuna malakar

After some time Arjuna entered the temple to offer flowers. Suddenly all the six group members hiding behind the door attacked.



Tying up Arjuna, they threw him aside and started misbehaving with his wife —



Helpless Arjuna was highly perturbed. He thought —

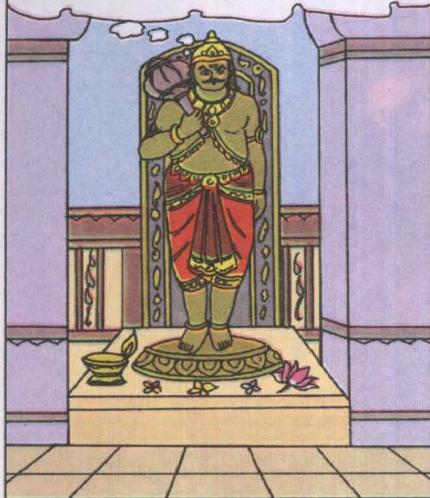
Oh ! This Yaksha I worship from my childhood is, in fact, not a Yaksha or a god, else he would definitely come to my rescue at this hour of need. It is just a wooden statue.



## Arjuna malakar

Mudgarapani Yaksha (mace bearing deity) from within the statue read Arjuna's agony and thought—

Alas ! My staunch devotee Arjuna has lost faith in me. I must do something for him.

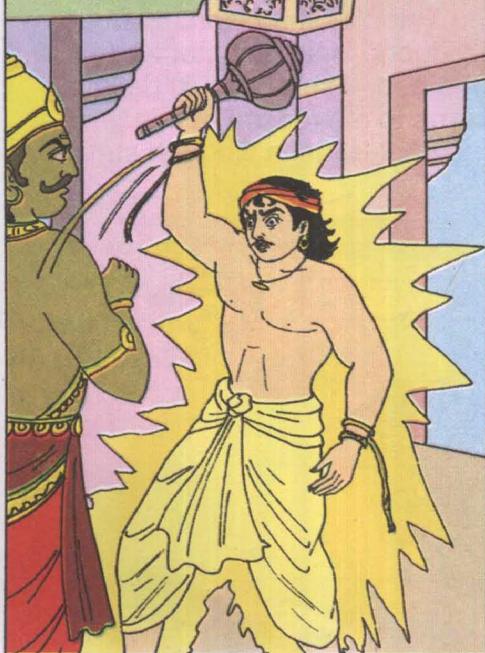


With this spark of thought the Yaksha came out of the statue and entered Arjuna's body.

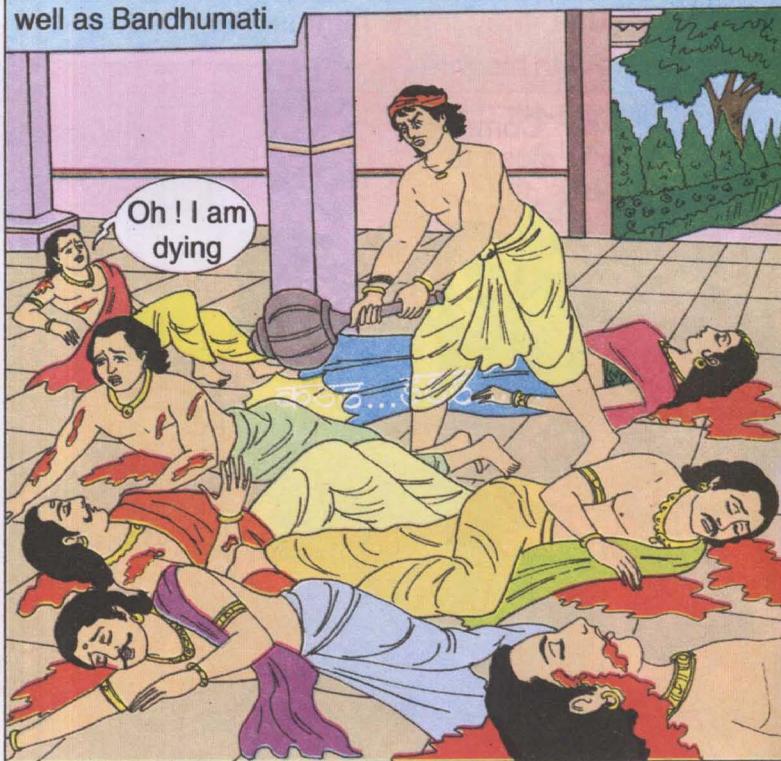


With Yaksha's power Arjuna broke all ties.

Then the Yaksha possessing Arjuna's body lifted the extremely heavy mace from the statue.



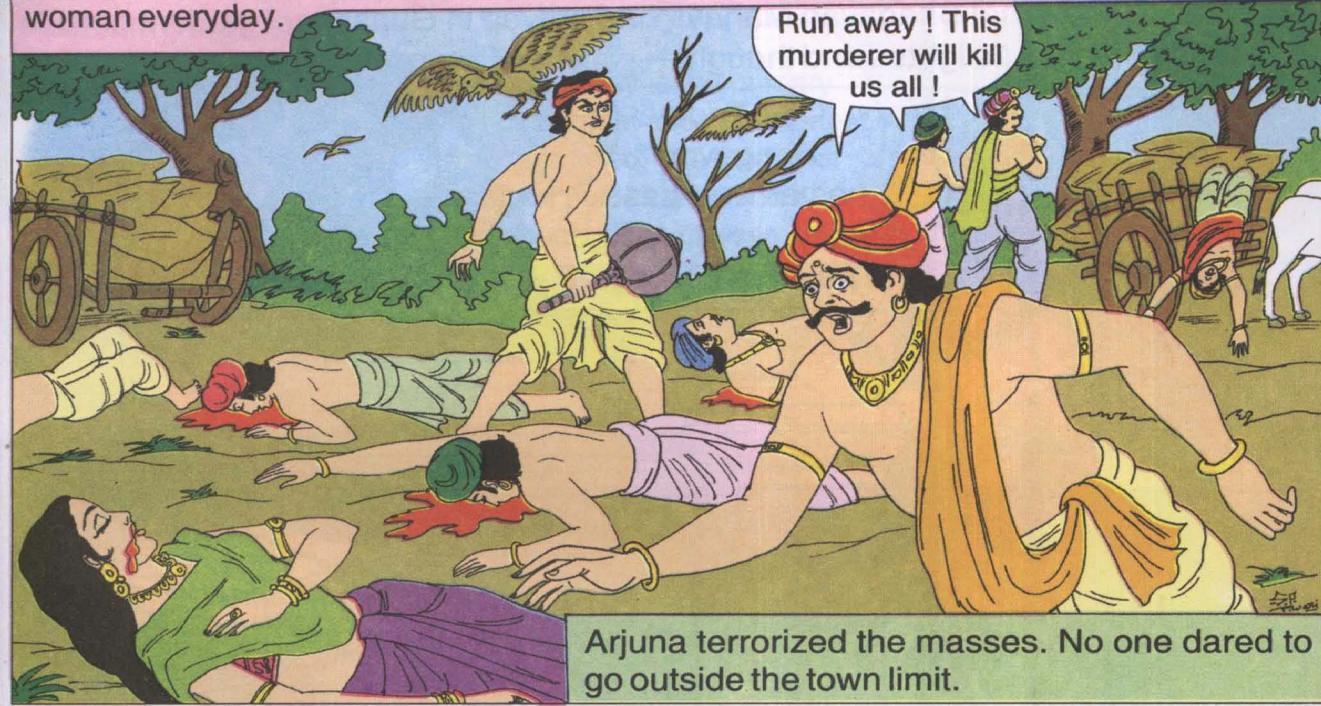
Hitting with the mace he killed all the six group members as well as Bandhumati.



## Arjuna malakar

Then he began wandering around outskirts of Rajagriha and killing six men and one woman everyday.

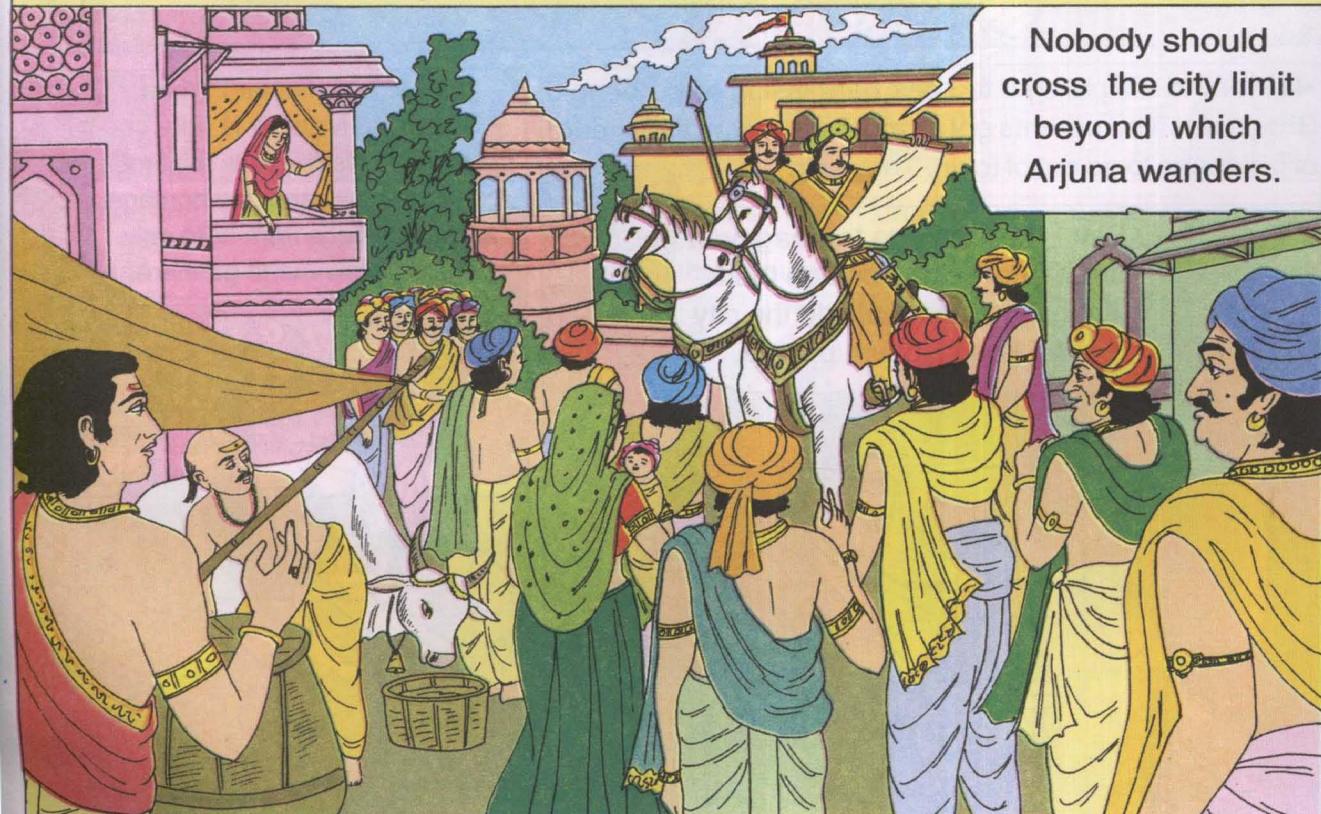
Run away ! This murderer will kill us all !



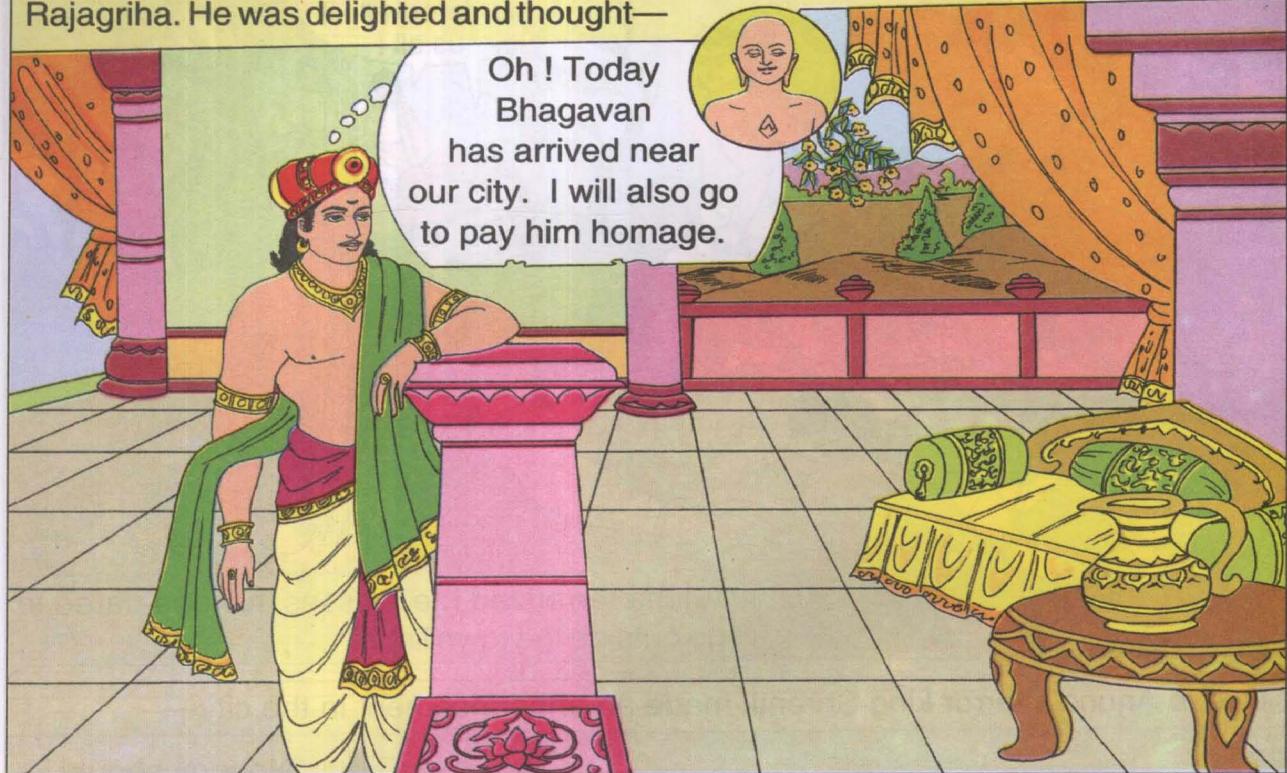
Arjuna terrorized the masses. No one dared to go outside the town limit.

Due to Arjuna's terror king Shrenik made an announcement in the city—

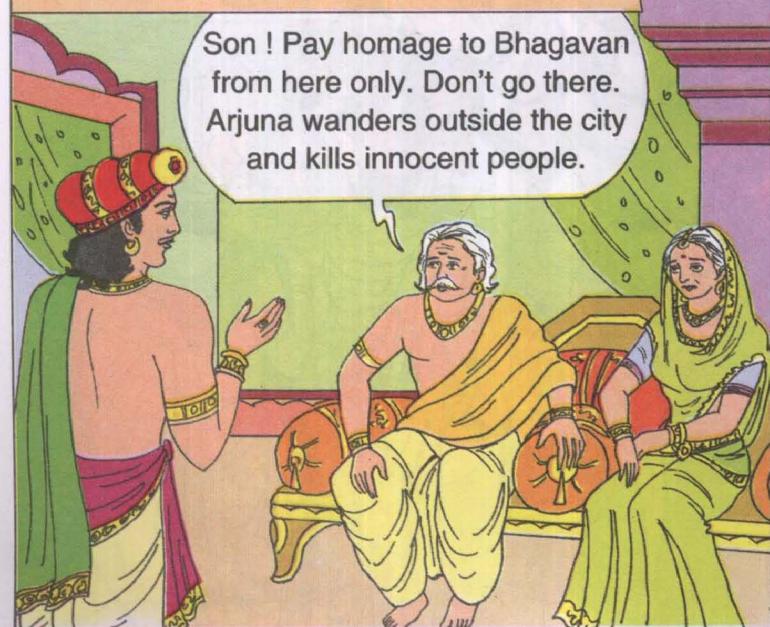
Nobody should cross the city limit beyond which Arjuna wanders.



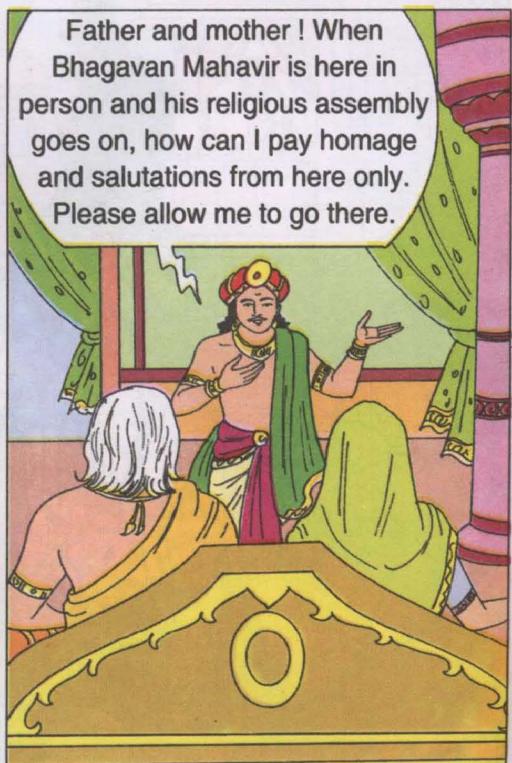
During that period a very rich Jain merchant Sudarshan lived in Rajagriha. One day he came to know that Bhagavan Mahavir had arrived in Gunasheel garden, outside Rajagriha. He was delighted and thought—



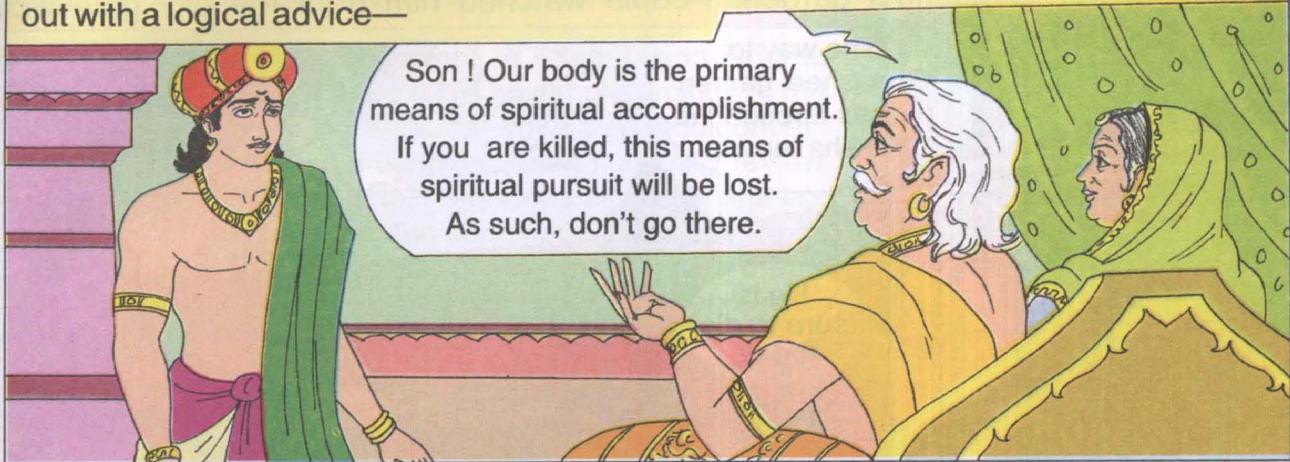
He went to his parents to seek permission to go behold Bhagavan. The parents got afraid the moment they heard of his desire to go out of town. They said—



Father and mother ! When Bhagavan Mahavir is here in person and his religious assembly goes on, how can I pay homage and salutations from here only. Please allow me to go there.

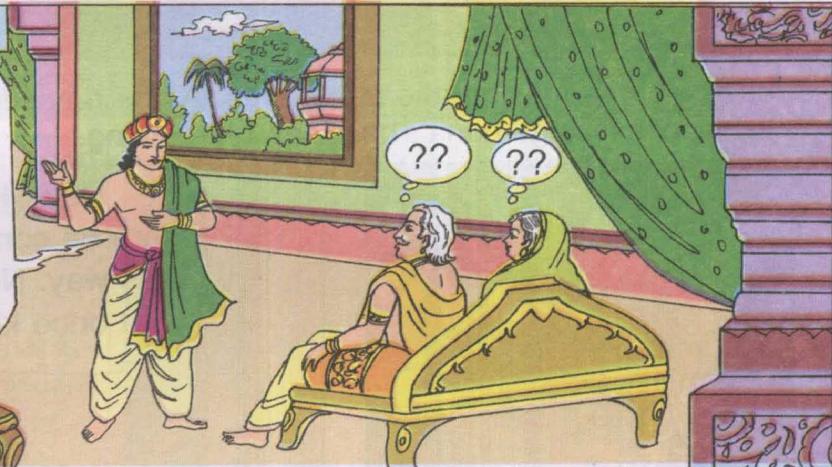


The parents again persuaded him but Sudarshan was adamant. Finally they came out with a logical advice—



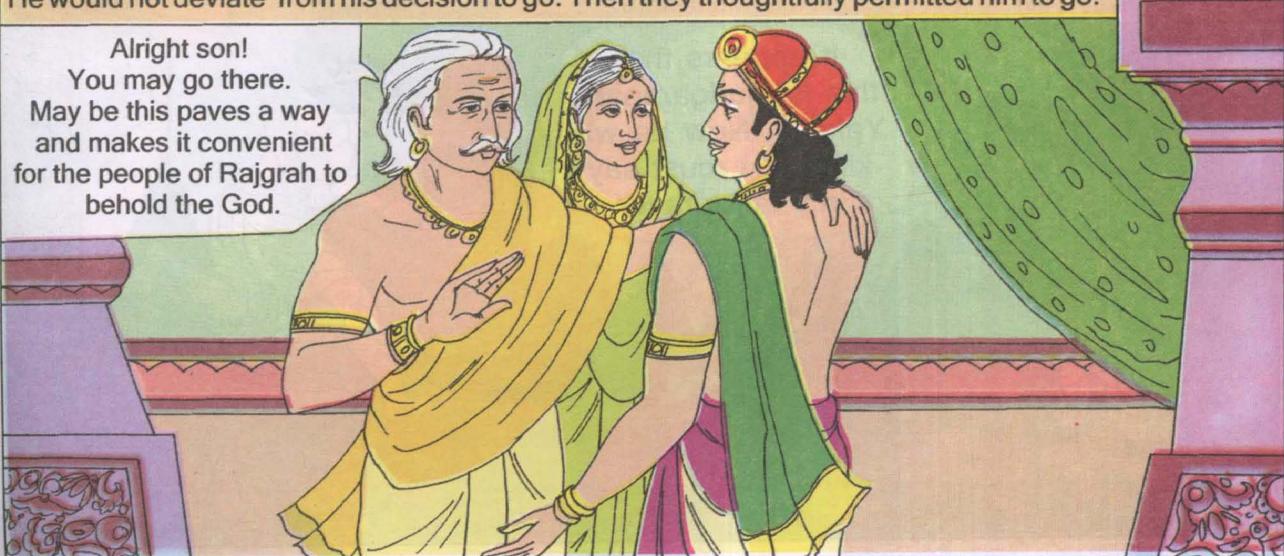
Sudarshan replied—

O Mother ! If this body is the primary means of religious pursuits then it is a golden opportunity for me. If I die while going to behold Bhagavan it would, indeed, be death on the religious path. What better fortune could there be than my dying on such an occasion.

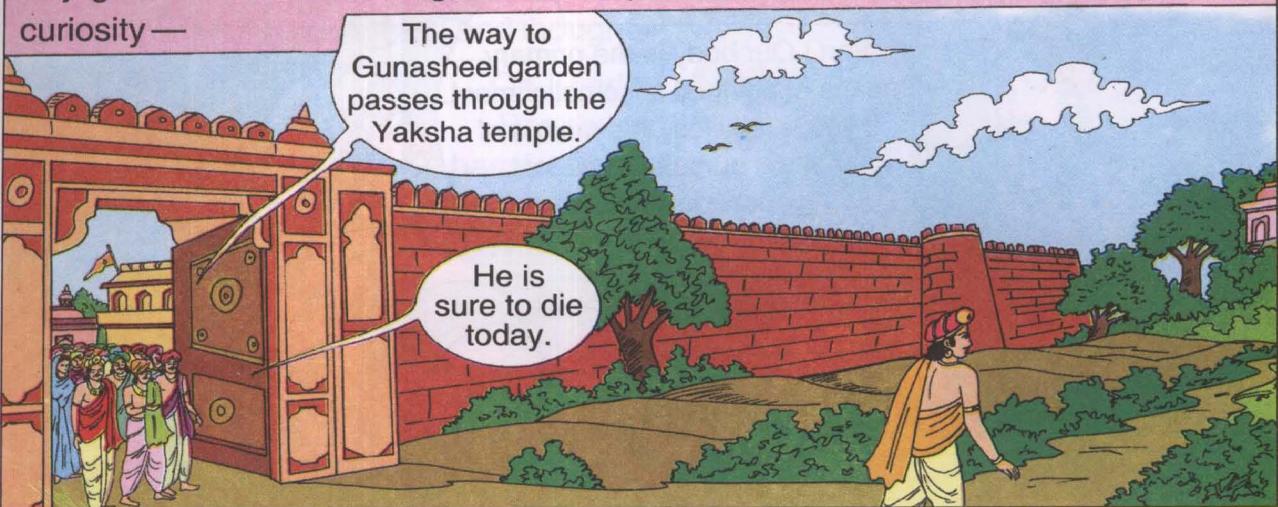


On hearing the logic offered by son, Parents were unable to counter the reply. They realized that besides being brave, their son was also a great devotee of God. He would not deviate from his decision to go. Then they thoughtfully permitted him to go.

Alright son!  
You may go there.  
May be this paves a way  
and makes it convenient  
for the people of Rajgrah to  
behold the God.



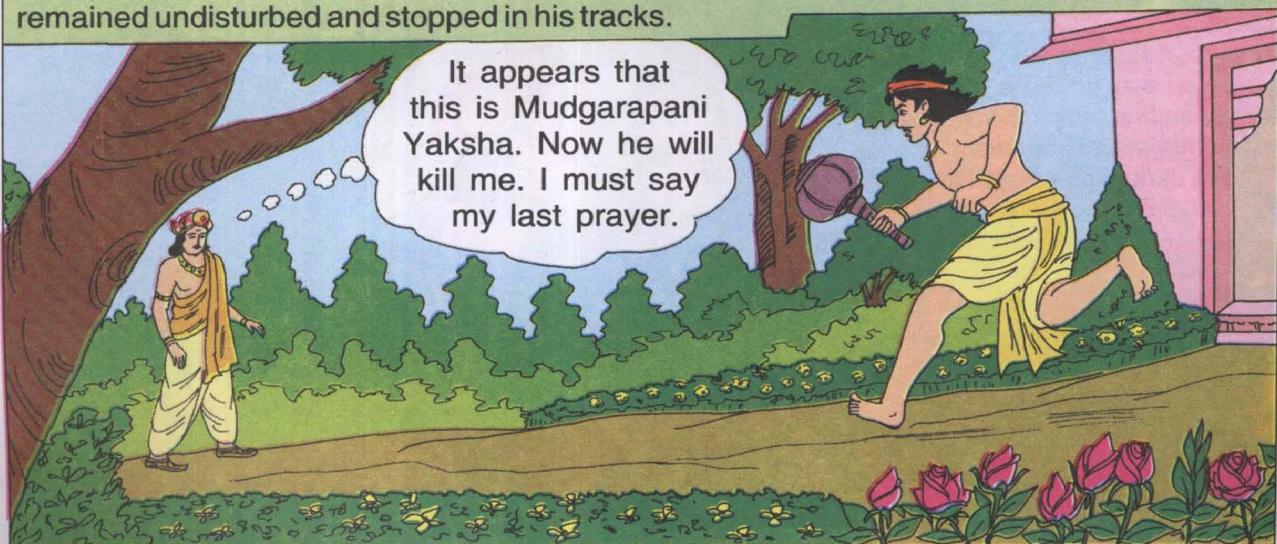
After taking leave from parents Sudarshan put on clean garb and left Rajagriha for Gunasheel garden. People watched him from the city gate with curiosity—



Sudarshan was moving ahead carefree. As he reached near the Yaksha temple the Yaksha possessing Arjuna's body saw him coming.



The angry Yaksha rushed to kill him. When Sudarshan saw the Yaksha coming to kill him he remained undisturbed and stopped in his tracks.



He then wiped the ground with his scarf and covered his mouth. Facing east he sat on the ground with raised left knee and joined palms. Bowing his head he uttered —

My obeisance to Arihants and Siddhas. If there were any shortcomings in the householder-vows that I took under your auspices, then I critically review my acts. I renounce eighteen sins and accept the conditional ultimate vow. If I escape this torment alive I will break the fast but if I die then I renounce all intake till death#.

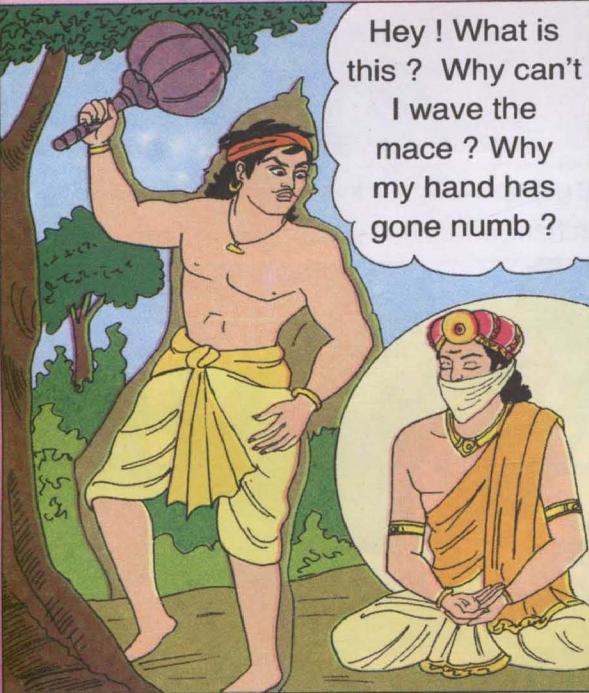


Thus after taking the ultimate vow he sat in meditation focusing on Bhagavan. The Yaksha came near and tried to hit him waving the mace, but —

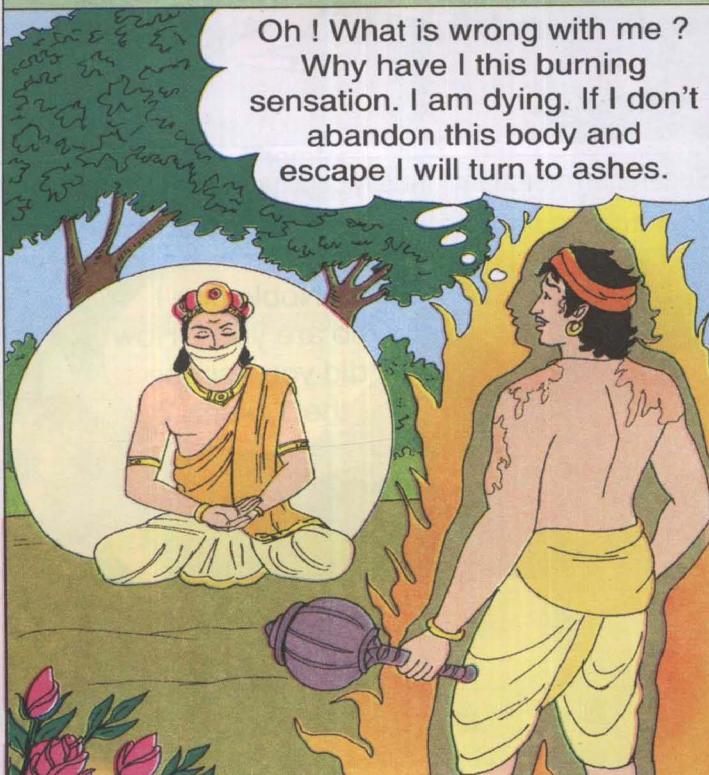
Hey ! What is this ? Why can't I wave the mace ? Why my hand has gone numb ?

Then the Yaksha started going around Sudarshan merchant. He was still unable to strike him with the mace. At last he stood still facing Sudarshan and stared at him. Suddenly —

Oh ! What is wrong with me ? Why have I this burning sensation. I am dying. If I don't abandon this body and escape I will turn to ashes.

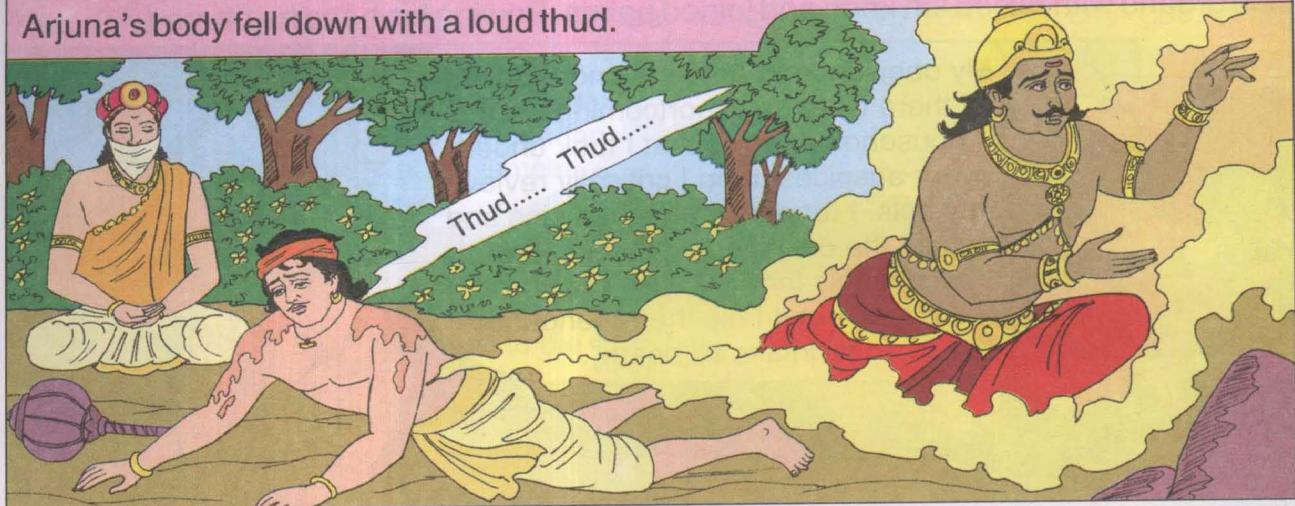


The Yaksha tried hard but failed to hit Sudarshan merchant.

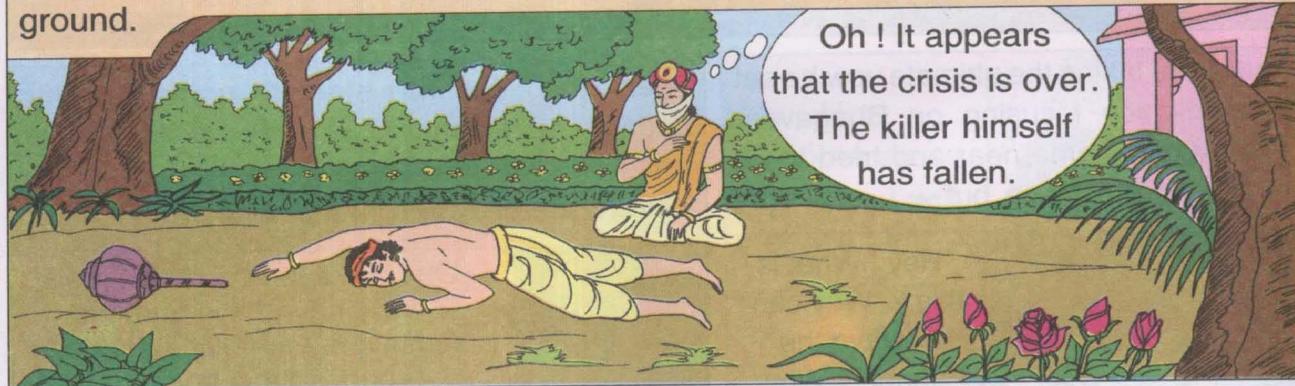


## Arjuna malakar

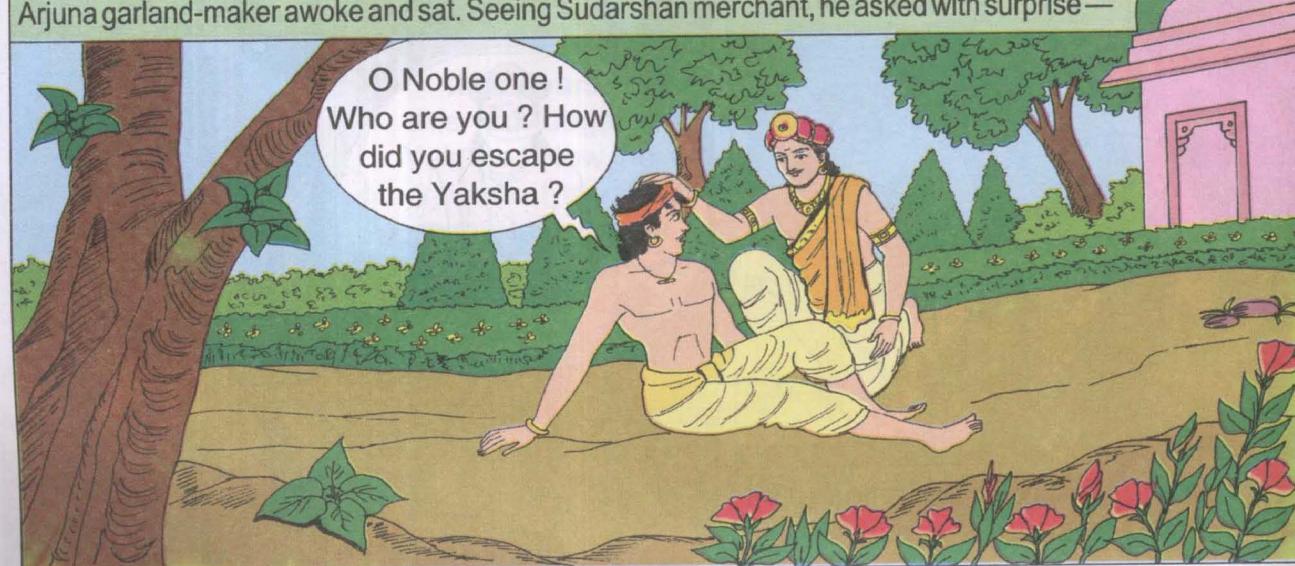
Within seconds the Yaksha left Arjuna's body and ran away towards the temple. Arjuna's body fell down with a loud thud.



Disturbed by the noise Sudarshan opened his eyes and saw Arjuna lying on the ground.



Sudarshan merchant formally concluded the ultimate vow. He got up and lightly touched Arjuna's head. Soon Arjuna garland-maker awoke and sat. Seeing Sudarshan merchant, he asked with surprise —



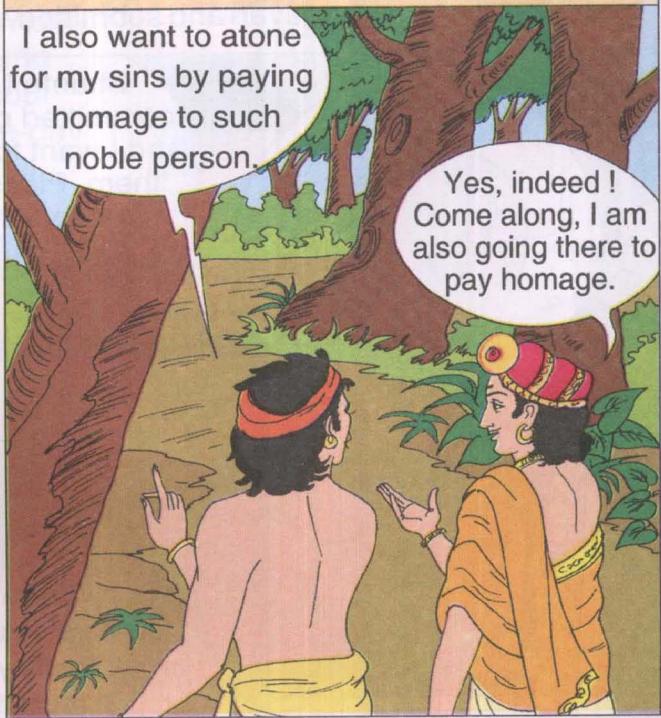
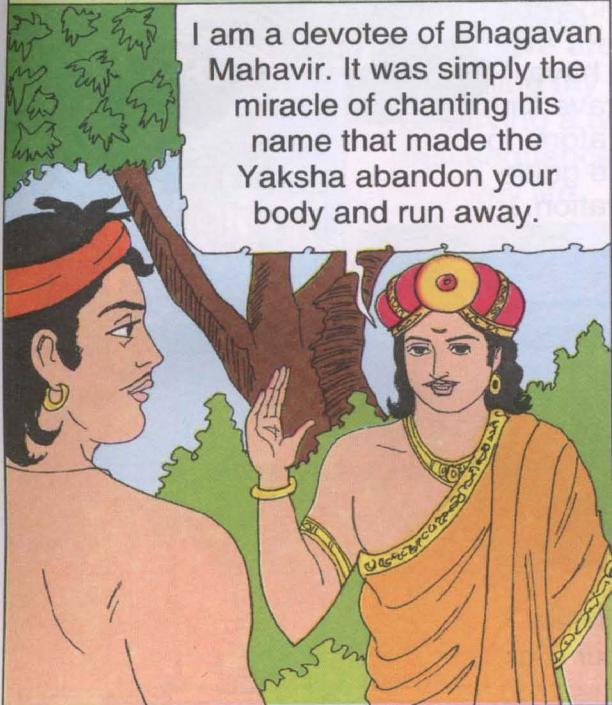
Sudarshan replied —

I am a devotee of Bhagavan Mahavir. It was simply the miracle of chanting his name that made the Yaksha abandon your body and run away.

Hearing about Bhagavan, Arjuna said —

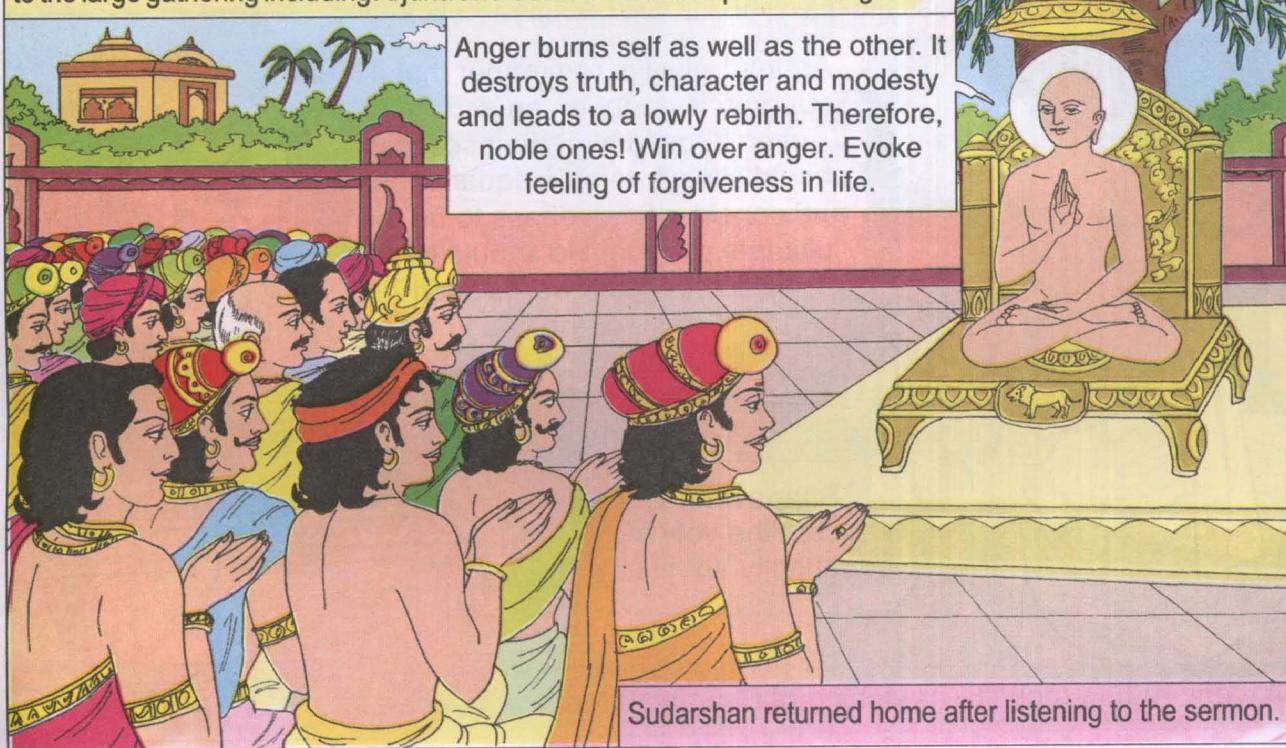
I also want to atone for my sins by paying homage to such noble person.

Yes, indeed ! Come along, I am also going there to pay homage.



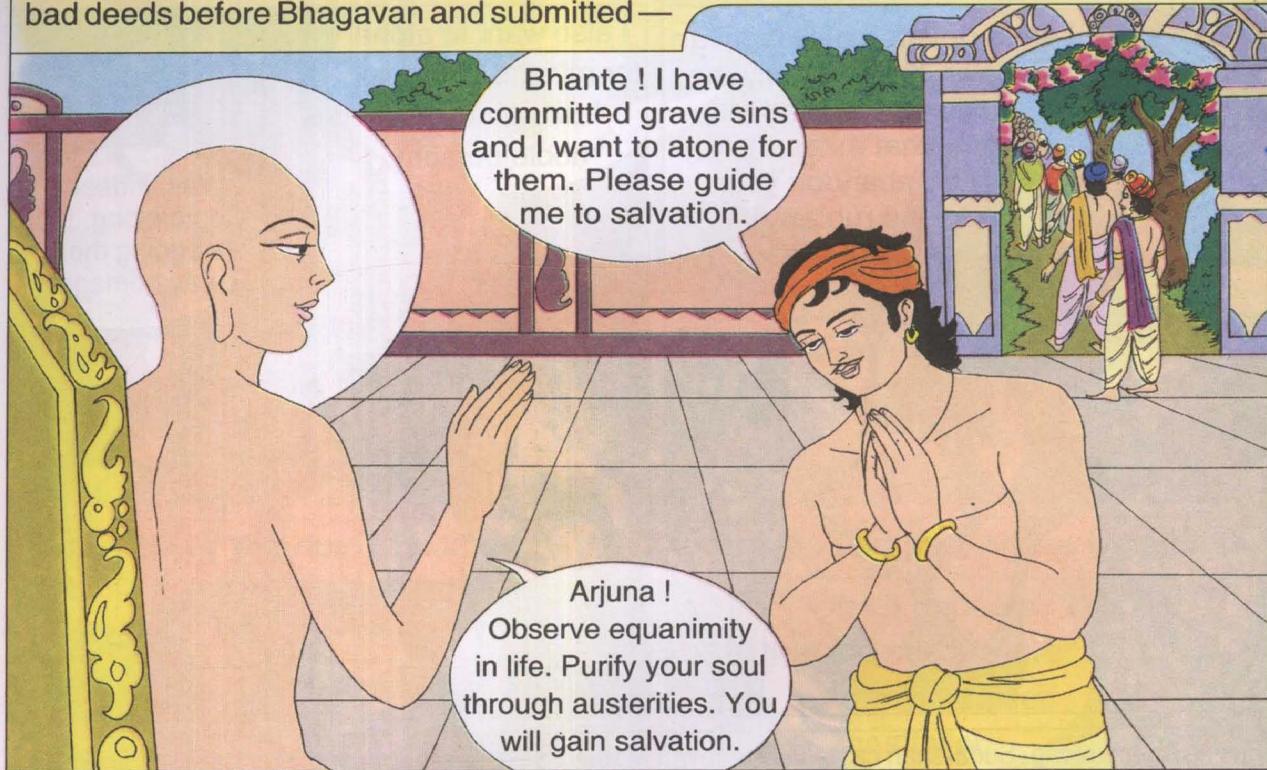
Taking Arjuna along, Sudarshan came to Bhagavan Mahavir's Samavasaran and after paying homage sat down on a side. Arjuna also paid homage to Bhagavan and sat near Sudarshan. Bhagavan gave his sermon to the large gathering including Arjuna and Sudarshan. He explained the gist —

Anger burns self as well as the other. It destroys truth, character and modesty and leads to a lowly rebirth. Therefore, noble ones! Win over anger. Evoke feeling of forgiveness in life.

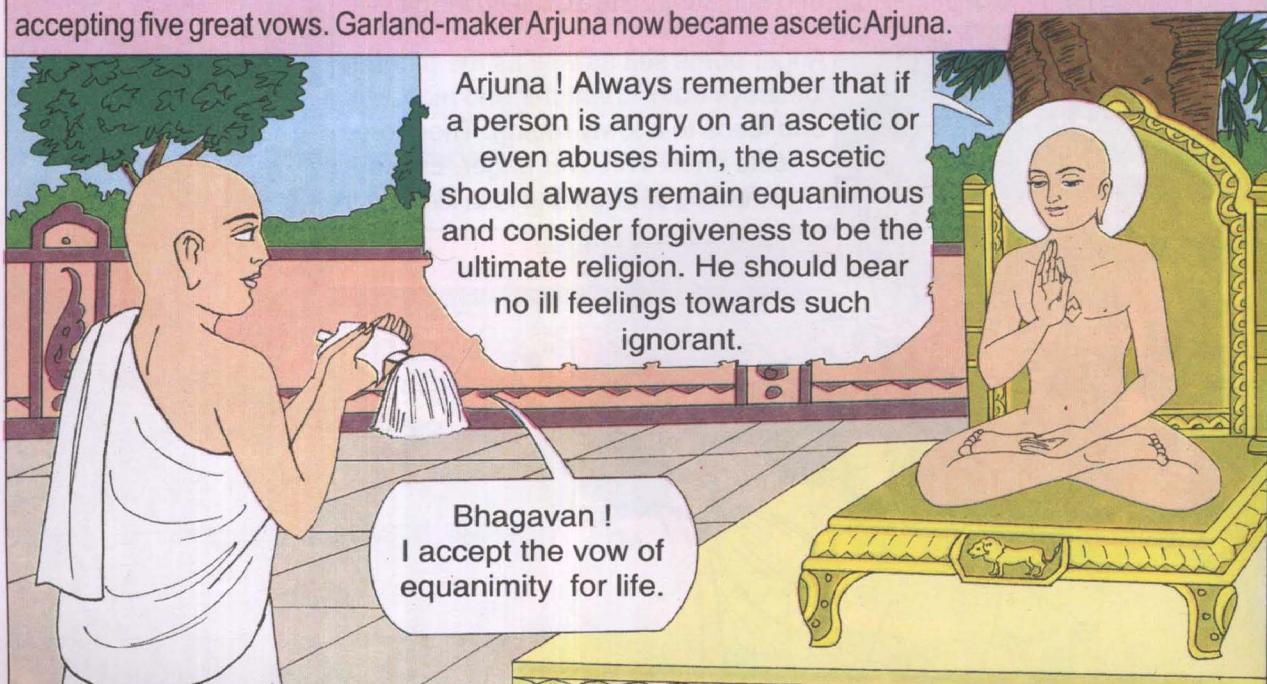


Sudarshan returned home after listening to the sermon.

But Arjuna did not go. He stayed back. After the assembly dispersed he atoned for his bad deeds before Bhagavan and submitted—



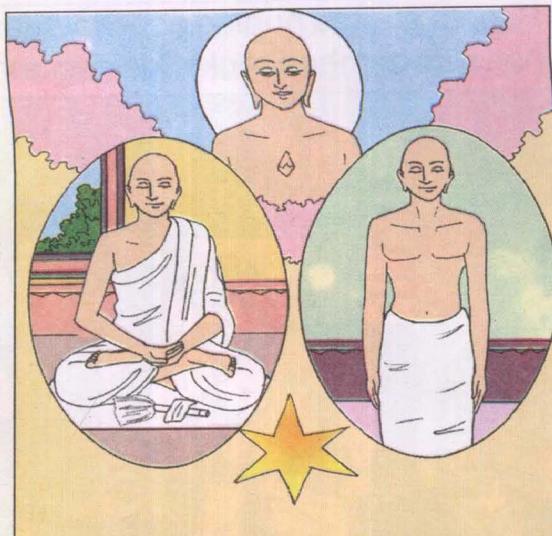
Arjuna decided to take to the path of forgiveness and austerities. He got initiated as an ascetic by accepting five great vows. Garland-maker Arjuna now became ascetic Arjuna.



Ascetic Arjuna took the preaching of Bhagavan Mahavir to heart.

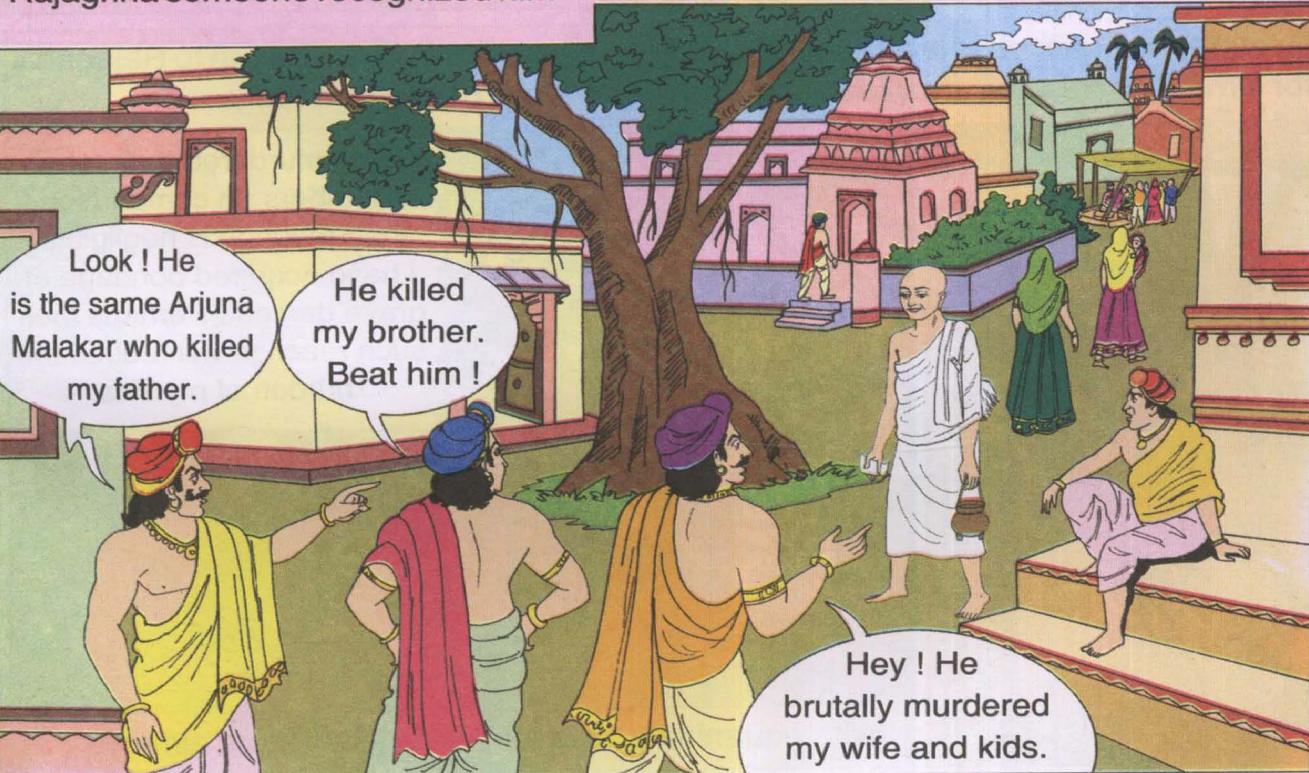
After initiation ascetic Arjuna took a tough vow—

O Lord! Today onwards  
I will move around  
enkindling my soul  
by observing a two-day  
fast sequence all  
my life.



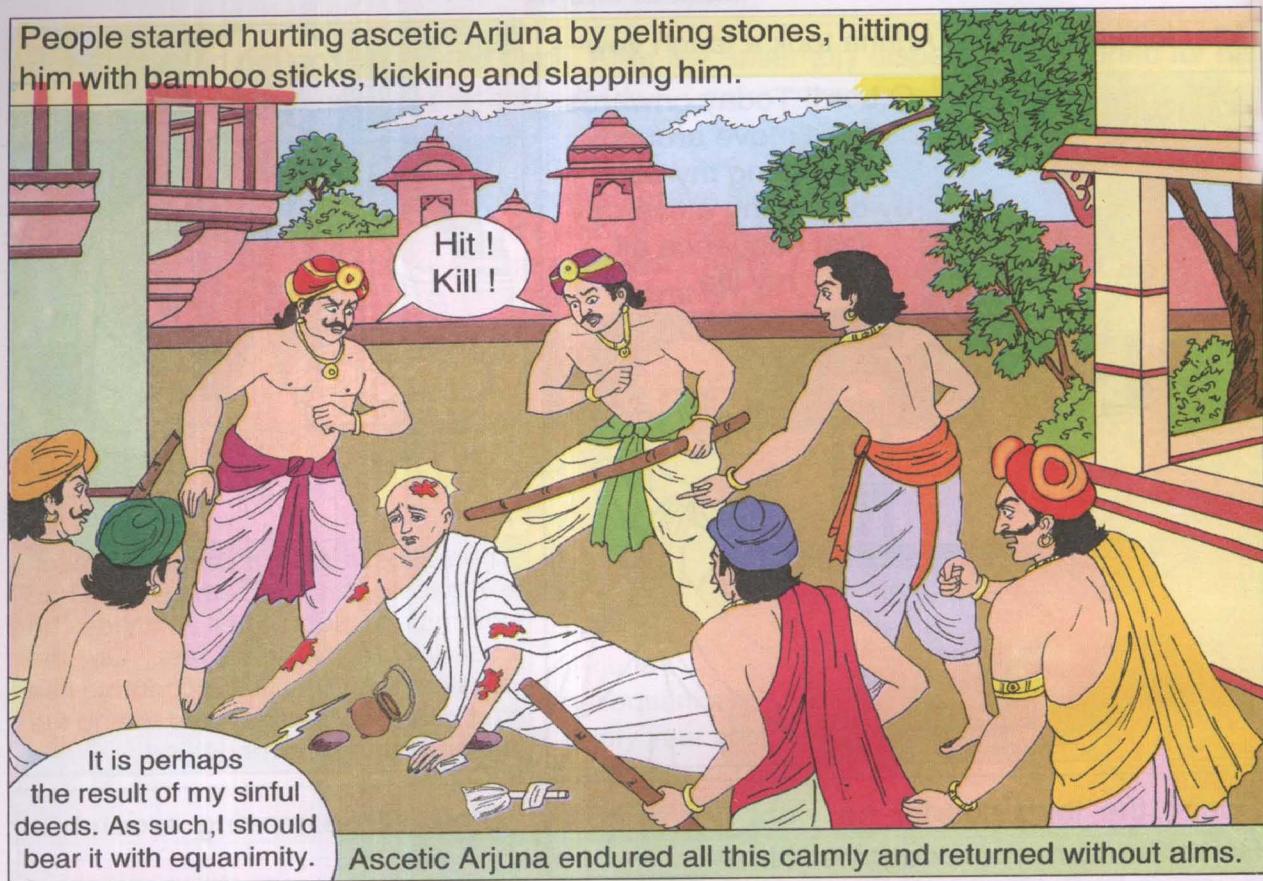
Then ascetic Arjuna devoted himself to cleansing his soul of the sins he had committed. Just after initiation he observed a two-day fast. On the breakfast-day he studied during the first quarter of the day and during the second quarter he meditated.

During the third quarter he went out to collect alms. While moving around in Rajagriha someone recognized him—



## Arjuna malakar

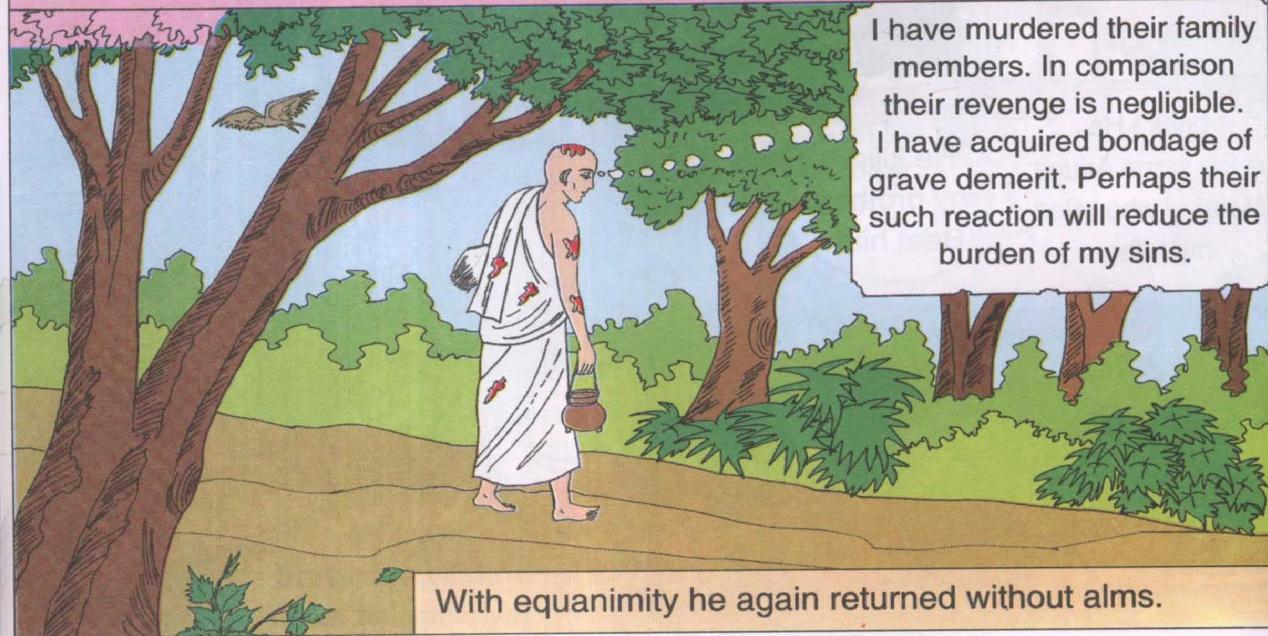
People started hurting ascetic Arjuna by pelting stones, hitting him with bamboo sticks, kicking and slapping him.



It is perhaps the result of my sinful deeds. As such, I should bear it with equanimity.

Ascetic Arjuna endured all this calmly and returned without alms.

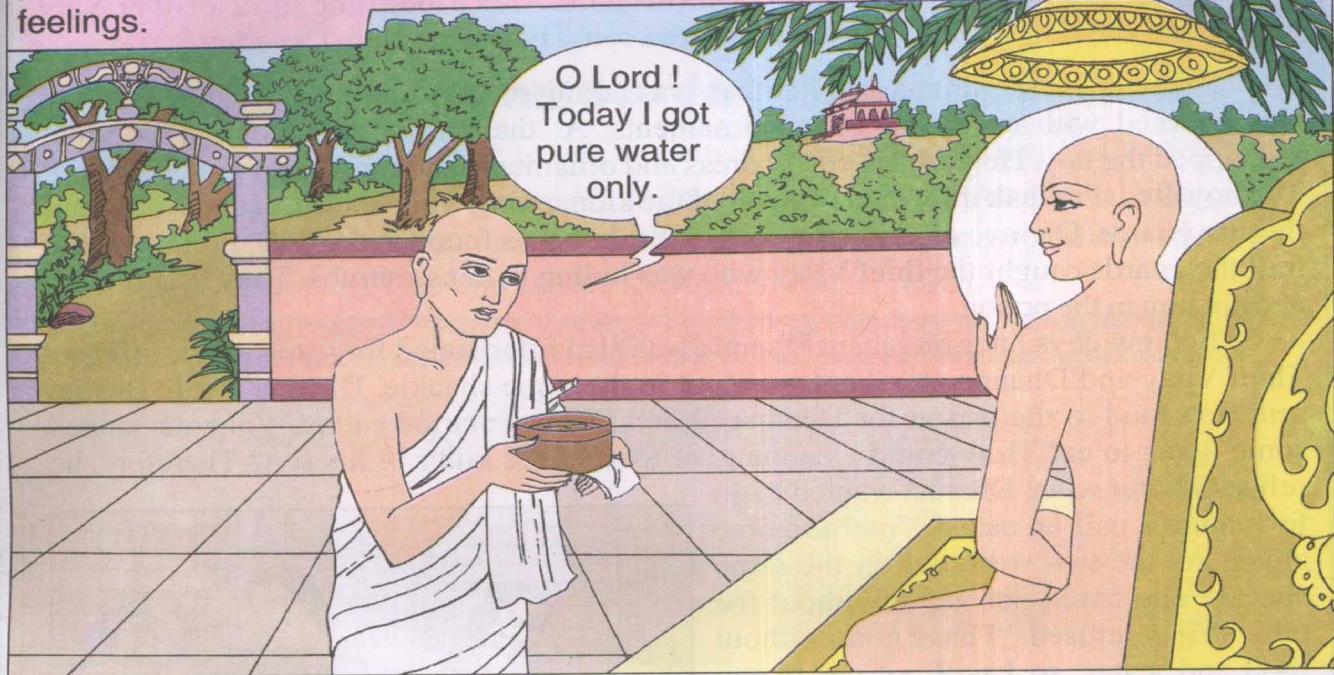
Next day he again observed two-day fast. After two days he again came to Rajagriha for alms. People again insulted and beat him. He again returned calmly.



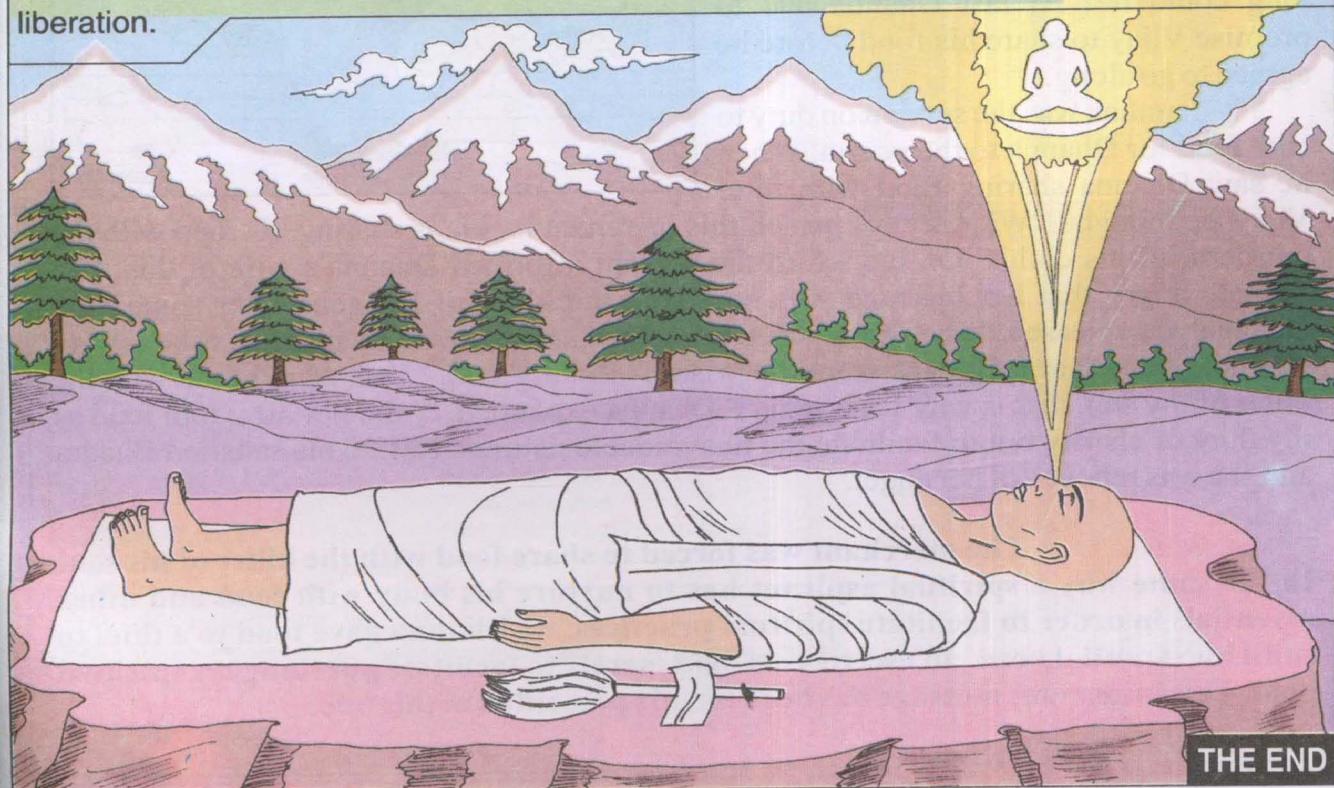
With equanimity he again returned without alms.

## Arjuna malakar

This way ascetic Arjuna continued to wander for alms, facing afflictions with patience and endurance. Whatever little pure alms he got, he accepted without any ill feelings.



Ascetic Arjuna purified his soul by great austerity of alms-collection and observed the ascetic code for six months. After that he observed the ultimate vow for fifteen days and attained liberation.



**THE END**

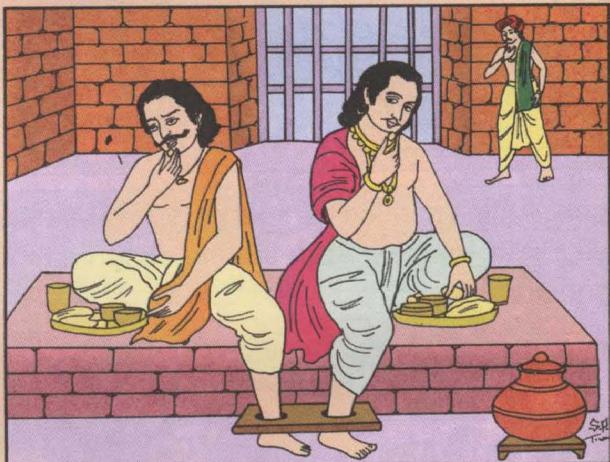
## VIJAY THIEF

In Rajagriha city a merchant named Dhanna lived happily with his wife. After a long time and a lot of prayers the couple got a son. They named him Devadutt.

One day a servant named Panthak was taking out Devadutt for playing. The boy was adorned with costly dress and ornaments. At that time a thief known as Vijay kidnapped the boy. He took his costly dress and ornaments and threw him in a deep well. The boy died. Panthak informed Dhanna of the kidnapping who, in turn, at once informed the city guards. On investigation the body of the boy was found in the well. Following the trail the guards caught the thief Vijay who was hiding in dense shrubs. They beat him up and put him in the prison.

A few days later merchant Dhanna was also imprisoned for some minor offence. Thief Vijay and Dhanna merchant were put in the same shackle. Dhanna's wife Bhadra sent rich food to the prison for Dhanna. When Dhanna started eating, Vijay demanded some items to eat. How could Dhanna give food to the killer of his son? Therefore, he refused. Later when Dhanna wanted to go for nature's call he asked Vijay to come along. As the two were tied in the same shackle one could not move without the other. Vijay refused, "I have gone without food and water; so I will not go. If you want you may go alone." For some time Dhanna tried to contain the urge. But how long could he? At last Dhanna had to promise Vijay to share his food before he agreed to go along.

Panthak was the servant on duty to take food for Dhanna to the prison. When he saw Dhanna sharing food with thief Vijay, he thought, "What sort of person this merchant is? He is sharing his food with the murderer of his child." On his return the servant informed Dhanna's wife of this. She became angry that her husband was nurturing the killer of her son. After some time Dhanna was released. When he reached home and saw his wife in anger he asked. "Are you not happy that I am back from the prison." Bhadra said, "You shared food with the killer of my son, that is why I am angry." Dhanna explained, "I did not offer him food as my duty or charity but to facilitate the unavoidable nature's call." This satisfied Bhadra and she was relieved of her anger.



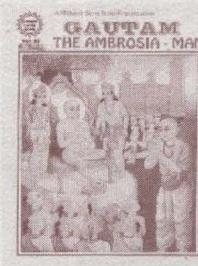
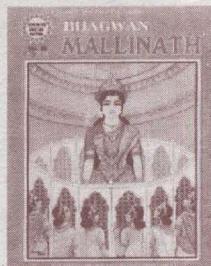
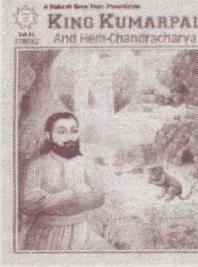
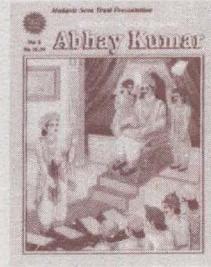
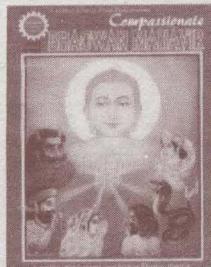
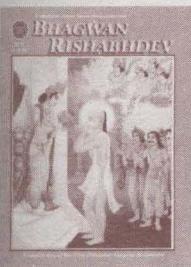
**Message —** The merchant was forced to share food with the killer of his son. In the same way a spiritual aspirant has to nurture his body with food and other essentials in order to facilitate spiritual practices. As Dhanna gave food to a thief to fulfil his essential need, an ascetic eats food merely to facilitate pursuing his spiritual goal. This important message has been lucidly presented in this tale.

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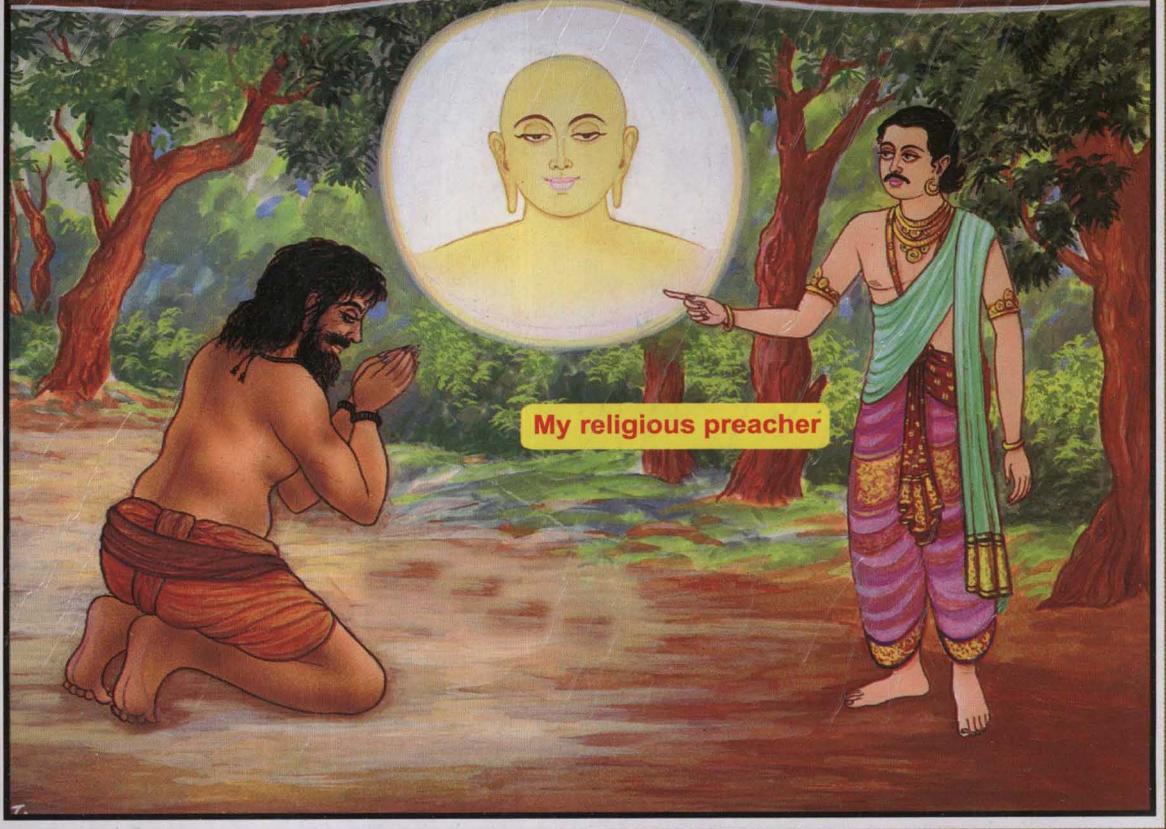
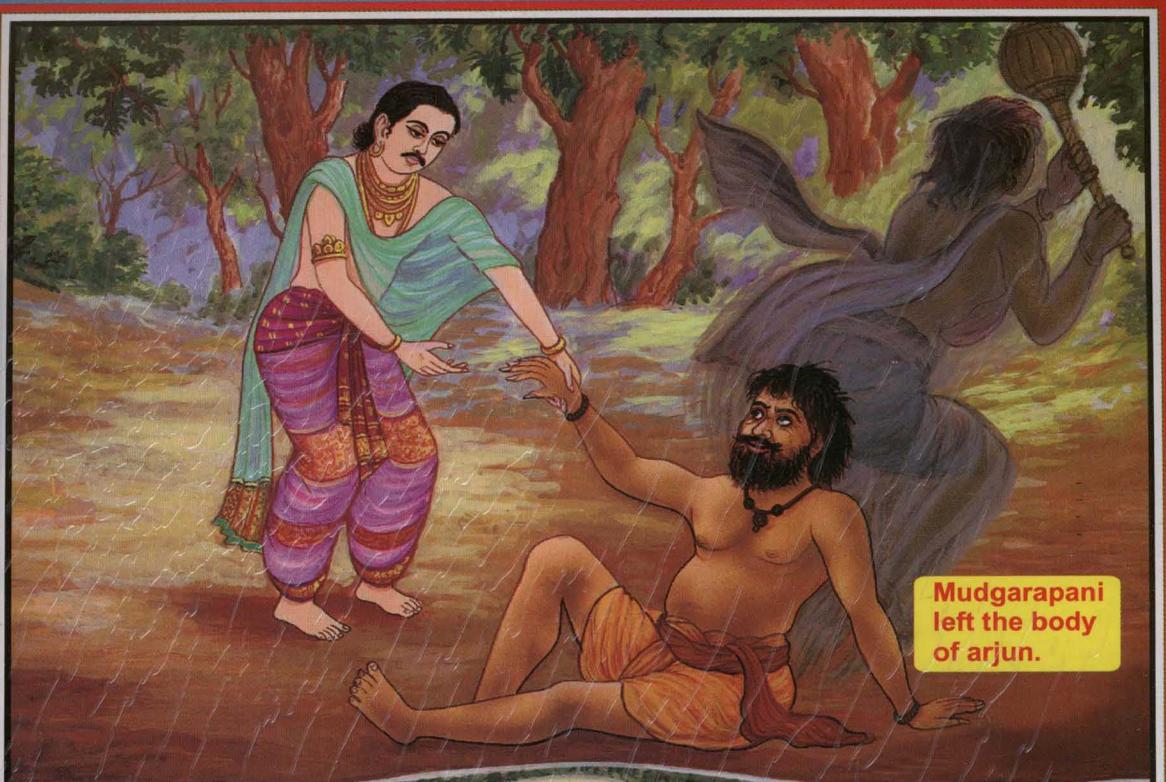
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